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CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XL. NO. 33. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1912. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

Who Was the Traitor?

A STORY OF FORT DESPAIR

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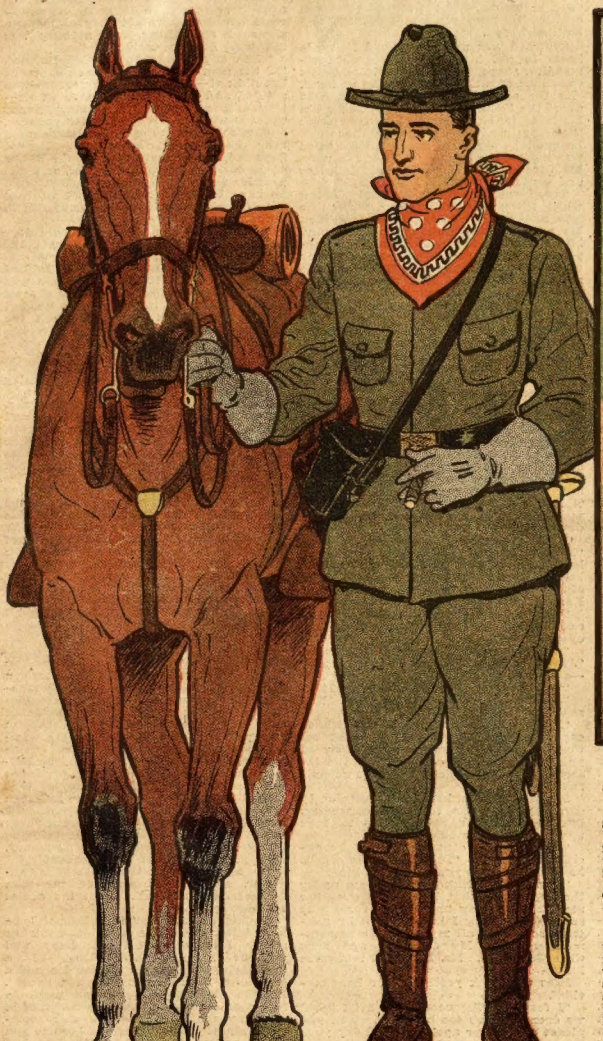

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CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST MYSTERY.

HE STOOD in the twilight, surveying the distinctive features of the town of Cutlip. This was no lengthy task, for it comprised no more than a score of rude structures for the use of man, most of which were mere shacks. Dropped down by unkind fate in the unkind parts of Arizona, Cutlip had ever since wrestled with adversity and made no headway. He could see this, but it impressed him very little, and as his steady gray eyes analyzed the settlement his figure held the erectness common to it.

At his back was the largest building in the place, placarded with a sign announcing that it was a hotel, and by his side was the landlord. The latter was doing some looking, too, but his attention was all upon his guest, and his eyes were openly inquisitive. As they did not serve him in full he had recourse to words.

"I understand," he remarked, "that you are an army man?"

"That is right," replied the guest.

"And a leftenant, and your name is Saywood. The driver said so."

"Clearly, he is a man of veracity," remarked the Lieutenant, his gaze shifting to the landlord and a faint smile lightening his somewhat severe face.

"So you are going to Camp Number Thirty? Going there to stay as one of the garrison?"

"Yes."

"I've been there myself. Had many's the bite to eat there, and many's the friendly little talk there. Why, I was so well liked there by some that my friends all say I might have got a job as horseshoer or carpenter of them, but I'm not putting on any airs. It ain't my way. Besides, I'd rather visit there than stay."

"Had you?"

"Yes. Fact is, the place ain't what I'd call real attractive. Why, man, the powers that be in the city of Washington only know why a Government fort was ever located there. True, when it was established the Apaches was that unholy they had to be frowned down upon with big guns, blue coats and the only real flag in the world, but why did the Government pick out the worst site for the new fort it could find, and why did it continue the fort there when the Apaches swapped their war-togs for skirts and bonnets?"

"Then," answered the Lieutenant composedly, "they are no longer hostile?"

"No more than a blind pup. No more Injun fighting hereabouts, Leftenant, but the fort stays. Why? Do ye know that 'tis said the high officers have totally forgotten that such a fort exists?"

"No."

"Fact, and I believe it. There is that blessed garrison, squirming in the broiling sun and thankful even for the seven inches by nine shade cast by the flag upon the earth under their feet. That's what Fort Despair is."

"Fort Despair?"

"Nickname for Camp Number Thirty. Yes, the troopers call it Fort Despair. They don't like it there. Do you think you will?"

"I don't know."

"Pretty lately out of West Point, ain't you?"

"I never was there."

"Oh! then you ain't that sort."

The landlord had been doing his best to extract information without too direct questioning, but always with the idea in mind that his companion was a graduate of West Point. Such a person he would have treated well, since business demanded good usage, but back of all would have been contempt for his guest. As he looked at it, an Eastern man might pick up enough points in the West to save him from being a total blockhead, but that was about all.

Now he had a new idea, and, somehow, it seemed to disquiet him. He surveyed the officer critically and secretly shook his head. His talkative mood disappeared, and presently he moved back into the so-called hotel. There he found the bartender idle, and accosted him.

"Do ye know what I think, Joe?" he demanded.

"No."

"Reckon that Leftenant is an old plainsman."

"He ain't thirty years old," Joe reminded.

"I'm not guessing his age. I mean, reckon he was grown up in the West.

That would mean he was up to snuff, sharp-eyed, wide-awake, likely to see things. Now, how would such a chap as that fit in at Fort Despair?"

"He wouldn't fit a great while," asserted Joe grimly. "If he got to seeing too much, he wouldn't see nothing very long."

Unconscious of these remarks Orville Saywood, Lieutenant, U. S. A., had left the hotel and was wandering along between the shacks. The structures had nothing to invite attention, nor had the half-desert, forbidding area beyond, but he had traveled all day on the stage and his legs clamored for use. The only way to satisfy their demands was to walk, and he was doing it.

Going, he was aware, as he had been from the beginning, that his presence was attracting a degree of attention from the citizens that seemed out of proportion with the probable unfamiliarity with strangers. He set this down to the fact that he was known to be an army man, passing the point by as lightly as he did the stares of the male and female population.

Leaving the last of the shacks he advanced into the area beyond. After a few rods the way grew rough and rocky, gradually ascending until, half a mile farther on, a range of hills rose black and dreary against the sky. It was an elevation inviting neither by night nor day, but he had chosen the course because it pleased him better than the dead level south of the settlement.

He was not wholly happy as he walked. When he had been ordered to Camp Number Thirty for garrison duty, he had regretted that the assignment was not to some place north of the Platte River, for that would have taken him to the region where he was born and reared, and to a land of fertility, whereas he had a shrinking from the Arizonian desolation of which he had often heard.

It was not until he met the stage-driver and, later, the landlord, that he learned from their vague information that the garrison that awaited his coming was especially dreary. Fort Despair! The nickname carried an intimation not pleasing to one who had been ordered there for an indefinite time.

However, he was a soldier, and in a military garrison he would have army duties to perform, the company of other soldiers, and the flag would wave above him. His depression was but brief, and he moved on in a comfortable frame of mind.

Picking his way along the rough ground he walked until the ascent became steep and progress too trying to please him after his day's journey, and then turned back. Turning, he had a glimpse of something in the rear, a dark shape that flitted and was gone—an object in his old home in the North, he would have set down as a skulking wolf.

Now, he was not so sure. His hand fell to the revolver that was ready for use, and, keenly alert, he moved toward where the shadow had been. Reaching that point he found a rock, one of various of its kind, but nothing more. The shadow was gone, and, for man, it had crept away in the abundant cover.

He had gone a hundred yards farther when something whistled past his ears and a rifle-shot rang out behind him. Unharmed, he dropped to cover as the shadow had dropped, and, angry at the attempt to take his life, began to work rapidly backward to encounter the fellow who had shot.

The ground was covered with the skill of the experienced plainsman that he was, but again nothing happened. As near as was possible he went to where the marksman had been, but the night wrapped the tract in obscurity and silence and biting heat kept it company.

Saywood was disappointed, for it was not his way to permit other men to blaze away at him and get clear of punishment, but he was too weary to carry the campaign further, so he again turned toward the settlement. This time he went unmolested, and he was soon in the hotel and bedded for the night. Lying there he wondered who had tried to kill him, but as the region was known to be prolific of lawless characters who would do anything for a few dollars, an explanation was easy to find. Found, it was possibly reliable.

This idea had a setback in the morning. He slept the night through in spite of the temperature, and rose with the refreshed condition of his age. He had begun to dress when he noticed an object on the floor near the open window that had not been there when he retired.

It was a small sheet of brown paper, one corner of which was drawn together and tied with a string, and, as he soon discovered, was weighted with a pebble. He picked it up, saw penciled words upon it, and read as follows.

"To the Lieutenant: If you have regard for your life, do not go to Fort Despair. Turn back! Once there you will be enveloped in conditions you cannot understand. Those who seem to be your best friends will be your worst enemies, mystery will be about you, thick and strange, and out of this will grow danger to you. If you go on you will meet all this, the mystery and the danger, and you will be killed. Once there your life will not be worth a candle. I would tell you more if I could, but I dare not. Be warned. Turn back. Do not go to the fort!"

There was no signature.

"I wonder," mused the Lieutenant, "if there are idle jokers in this settlement? But then, there was the fellow who tried to shoot me, last night."

He could not well ignore the terms of the warning and the shot.

"A woman's writing," he proceeded, analytically.

The fact was not to be doubted. The delicate strokes, so characteristic of the generation, were not to be misunderstood.

"Unless I err in my conclusions there is at least one kind soul here who would give me aid in a way. A woman! They are the sort to have and hold good will and I am grateful, but she is very indefinite. It would seem, however, that the Arizona public looks to see me drop into trouble at the fort, and that more than one knows what conditions are. Possibly they all know. Right there they have the advantage of me. I'm in the dark."

He smiled and thrust the paper into his pocket. The smile was not contemptuous nor was it careless, but Saywood had lived his whole life among wild scenes, and danger was nothing new. That he was in fresh peril was only like turning a page in a book.

When he had completed dressing his mind went back more earnestly to the note, and he drew it from his pocket.

"Odd!" he murmured. "I am to meet conditions I shall not understand, mystery will be about me, and those who seem to be my best friends will be my worst enemies. The writer forget that I should be in a Government fort? Or did she know more than that? Well, the mystery has already begun."

Once more he pocketed the letter, after which he went to breakfast. An hour later he was in saddle and on his way to the garrison, using a horse that had been awaiting his coming.

CHAPTER II.

THE NIGHT ALARM.

Something aroused the sleeper. He moved, opened his eyes and sat up in bed suddenly, his senses unusually acute for one just come out of slumberland. Awake, the impression was strong within him that he had been awakened by something wholly out of the ordinary course of events, and he was not disposed to sink back into unconsciousness until the matter was settled.

Lieutenant Saywood had been a week at Camp Number Thirty. He had fallen quietly into his sphere of duty, learned the peculiarities of the garrison as fast as possible, and, as senior in his rank, had been assigned to all. A vacant dwelling had enabled him to set up housekeeping, and he occupied the house with only a "striker" for a companion. He was in his house on this night, and had slept peacefully until stirred out of rest by—what?

It was not acuteness, but the power of a strong impression, that made him so oddly uneasy. Logic told him to sink back upon his bed, forgetting his disturbed mood, but the impression combatted logic.

He rose softly and moved to the window that looked out on the parade. All was quiet there, and except for the lights shining from the adjutant's office and the guardroom, all was dark. The garrison lay sweltering under an Arizona sky, sluggish, somber, gloomy. Nothing save, undoubtedly, the sentries, moved—or did something move?

He brought his scrutiny nearer to hand, shifting to another window. Now, another house was near, being only just beyond the picket-fence—the residence of Captain Relford, Commandant of the post. That building seemed to sleep like everything else, yet he had just thought he heard a footstep on the graveled walk. What of it? What if somebody did walk in the uncomfortable night? Again logic told Saywood to return to his bed.

Then a new sound stole into his hearing. Click, click, click! This was something out of the common, and he gained the belief that it was just such a sound that had awakened him. He thrust his head fully out of the window and saw the unexpected. A woman was passing along the strip of green that bordered his own house.

More than men, women, by their appearance, talk even in semi-darkness. Saywood, looking, knew that woman who moved was no ill-dressed, slovenly laundress, servant, or hill-dweller. The trim, shapely figure bespoke the person of refinement and social position.

The Lieutenant smiled indulgently, mentally reproving himself for too much activity of mind. In Captain Relford's home lived his daughter Estelle and her companion, Zyra Cheswick. Both were like the figure, slight and trim, and, doubtless, had a right to be near the Commandant's house.

But this mover was within Saywood's yard. What was she doing there? Still further he bent forward, bent on establishing her identity, but she turned the corner and was invisible. Then again the sound—click, click, click! It was near where she had gone.

Saywood did not like that sound. It was too much like the efforts of somebody to pick a lock, and he made a sudden resolution. Turing, he flung on a few garments, and then ran lightly down the stairs and toward the rear door. He was not satisfied with his own course, for the temptation was strong to drop from the window, but it was a radical step to take simply because he heard an odd sound, and, moreover, it might bring him into disfavor with the trim young woman.

Light-footed, he ran into the kitchen and promptly had a discovery. The farther window was raised, and framed within the gap were the head and shoulders of a man.

The Lieutenant stopped short. If somebody aspired to enter his quarters burglariously, or otherwise, he wanted to abet the step so far as to have the fellow where he could get hands upon him. Let him come by all means. Then—a grapple, and further discovery.

It was well planned, but the ears or eyes of the unknown served him too well. There was a startled exclamation, the head shot back and the skulker was gone.

Saywood ran forward and vaulted out of the window. Striking the ground he looked sharply and had two figures within the field of his vision. The trim young woman was running toward his front gate, while a man was scaling the fence next to Captain Relford's yard.

After the latter the Lieutenant shot like a flash. He, too, leaped the fence, and it was quickly clear that his agility far exceeded that of the stranger. A short race followed and then he had his man. The latter found a muscular hand upon his collar, and the abrupt cessation of his flight swung him sideways and both men fell.

Saywood was uppermost, and he made haste to get his hold into more commanding shape, but as he did this he was conscious of a third figure close at hand.

He turned a trifle, but not in time to avert the thing that occurred. It was in his mind that the person had come from the Captain's house, and that, therefore, he must be a friend, but what followed was not so convincing. A blow fell upon his bare head, and he dropped helpless and confused to the ground.

There was a brief interval during which his senses were astray, though he was not strictly unconscious, and then his wits came slowly back. He found himself half lying upon the earth, supported by Captain Relford's arms. Water was dripping from his face, and he realized that it had been cast upon him to hasten his recovery.

He blinked, partly because of the moisture that dripped into his eyes, and stared hard at two trim young women who stood before him, one of whom held a pitcher. The voice of the Commandant dribbled into his ears.

"Saywood, Saywood, speak out! Are you conscious now?"

The Lieutenant struggled, received aid from his superior, and gained his feet. His head ached, but this gave him no concern then. Two ideas rioted in his mind. A little before a trim young woman had been in his private yard, and now two trim young women, Estelle Relford and Zyra Cheswick, were before him. This was one of the ideas. The second was that he knew who had struck him down.

"Come, Saywood," urged the Captain. "Is all well with you? Only temporary bewilderment, eh? Don't say you have a bad hurt! It was I who hit you, but I had no idea it was you who fought with you. I struck the wrong man. Speak out!"

The Lieutenant carried a hand upward and flirted the water away from his eyes.

"All right, sir!" he replied stoutly. "Just a brief confusion. It is gone now—almost."

"What became of the other man?"

"Just what I would like to know. You see——"

"I fancy he was some blacksmith or carpenter who was taking a short cut through your grounds and so aroused your ire. Very proper, too, for the laborers have no business to invade officer's row."

Saywood's gaze had been tenaciously dwelling upon the trim young women, but he now brought his eyes to bear upon his superior officer.

"You saw the other man, sir," he exclaimed crisply. "Didn't you see where he went? Didn't you recognize him?"

"Now that I think further, I am under the impression that he vaulted over the rear fence. I say impression, for I was scared at finding I had hit you by mistake, so I gave all my attention to summoning help. My daughter and Miss Cheswick came. No, I did not recognize him."

Miss Cheswick proffered her handkerchief.

"I fear, Mr. Saywood," she said, "that we drenched you too liberally. Will you please accept our apologies and dry your face at my expense?"

Her tones were solicitious, but while the Lieutenant was duly grateful, he also rather resented the placing of himself in an attitude of receiving attention. He gave his thanks, found his own handkerchief and wiped the water away.

"The matter is trivial," he said, "though I admit that I am sorry the stranger escaped. You see, he was trying to enter my house burglariously. I baffled him—unless he has returned to his work."

Wheeling he leaped the connecting fence and went to the point of the recent attack. Relford followed.

"The window is shut," the Captain remarked.

"That does not mean it has not been otherwise, sir," Saywood retorted. "As I came out this way I think the proof is clear that it has been open."

"We will do well to search your house," Relford said, sharply. "If an intruder is there he shall be uncovered. I've been inclined to think lightly of this affair, but housebreakers cannot be classed as small fry. If we have such a man at this post I'll break his neck before court-martialing him."

"I think," added the Captain's daughter, from the fence, "that nobody has been near the window since I've been here. I should have seen him, or so it seems. Can the window have fallen of its own weight?"

"Possible, but not probable," replied her father. "Where is your striker, Saywood?"

"He seems to be asleep."

"It is Griffen. He is a reliable man. Still, why is he asleep now? Has he no ears?"

The Lieutenant did not reply. He had raised the window and was climbing in. This done, he went to the door and admitted the Commandant. A light was quickly made and the house searched. Griffen was found, seemingly wrapped in slumber. Captain Relford looked at him sharply when he had been aroused, but the man met their gaze with a show of innocence, and asserted that, being weary, he had slept though all the disturbance. Further than this nothing unusual was found. Neither in Saywood's room nor elsewhere did they come upon signs of ransacking, and nothing was missing. So they decided.

"This is an odd affair," said Relford. "If the man we ought to have captured but did not—all owing to my error—was a thief, and if he had a partner who returned here, why is nothing gone? Thieves usually have a definite purpose, and, with chance to carry out their aims, they don't let a chance slip. Really, Saywood, there must be a mistake in our diagnosis. There was no thief, and the prowler was only a random lurker. Can he have been under liquor? If so, how the deuce has the stuff been smuggled in here?"

"The way he went over the fence does not look like liquor aboard," said the Lieutenant shortly.

"I'll get at the bottom of it!" Relford declared. "Leave it to me, and you will see. My orderly, Wesley, is a very shrewd fellow. He shall take the trail up, but secretly, Saywood. Don't mention the matter to anybody."

"Do you trust Wesley fully?"

"Absolutely!"

"You know him well?"

"Have known him for years. Wesley is true blue."

There was little more to do or say. Saywood returned with his superior and stood by the fence for a few minutes, talking with the young ladies, and then the party broke up and he returned to his house and his room. There he stood looking out and thinking.

The whole occurrence dissatisfied as much as it perplexed him. Who was the trim young woman who had been in his yard? Why had she been there? Why had she run directly toward the burglar? True, she could not see him until she turned the corner, but—Saywood was perplexed.

And who was the male burglar? What had he come to steal? The little that Saywood guessed made the mystery all the deeper.

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY THICKENS.

Another day came, and the garrison took up its daily life in the usual manner. There was no sign of the trouble-breeder of the night, and no evidence that he was being hunted for, though Saywood had been assured by the Commandant that the secret system of the post had been set in motion, and as Relford was a stickler for military forms and discipline, his manner showed that he had taken the misadventure to heart.

"I'll not have anything lawless here," he had told the Lieutenant, with a sharp set of his heavy jaw. "If the thing is really loose and hanging is necessary, why, I'll hang half of the garrison!"

The matter was in the hands of his superior, so Saywood accepted the plan for secrecy and went about his duties composedly.

On his arrival at "Fort Despair" he had fallen into his allotted nook as senior Lieutenant without delay and without ostentation. Being of a thorough-going nature he had learned a good deal about the work that had passed. Besides attending to garrison work he had gone outside in saddle, sometimes in company with the troopers and sometimes alone. These rides had been to him in the nature of scouts. Riding, he had seen all he could, studied, made mental notes, and familiarized himself with the territory about the place.

Fort Despair had not been named without a reason. Its site was a breeder of gloom in itself Planted in the Arizona wilds, with a desert on one side, and grim, tangled hills on the other, there was nothing to relieve the forbidding monotony except the belt of green that bordered the stream to the north, a hundred yards from the post. Greenness was there, but elsewhere was sand, cactus, forlorn, dwarfed trees, and desolation, the one patched upon the other. And when the sun beat hotly upon the garrison, as it usually did, and the troopers sweltered and longed for an invigorating breeze that would not come, it was no wonder they called the post Fort Despair.

Saywood disliked the place at the start, and succeeding days had not lessened the feeling, but he was a servant of the Government, he had been stationed there, and he was steadfast in the purpose of doing his best. Being so disposed, he was absorbing information, making himself master of all details, and seeking to make himself useful.

When he went to his dinner, that day, he found Griffen, his soldier servant, had prepared an unusually tempting meal. Moreover, that man was clearly inclined to say something before leaving the Lieutenant.

"I'm mighty sorry, sir," he began, "that I slept last night when I should have been awake, but we had a hard day of it, and I reckon I was fagged out, so I slept sound."

"I might have made use of you if you had appeared sooner."

"I was a devilish clod!" Griffen bluntly exclaimed. "I'm ashamed of myself. I've been keeping my eyes open since."

"Have you seen anything?" Saywood asked, detecting something suggestive in the striker's manner.

"There are footsteps outside that I didn't make, nor you either."

"I have seen them."

"Oh! then you've been looking too, sir?"

"Naturally. Well, since you have seen them, what do you make of it?"

"I'm sorry to say, nothing. Nothing so far, but the man who made them marks may walk again. I'll be looking."

"One would suppose you expected to find the fellow moving around here again. Have you any suspicion as to his identity?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Before you entered my service you were in the barracks, and must often have been on post at night. Did any intruder ever try to pass you on these occasions, secretly or otherwise?"

"Never! If he had he would have died. That's all. When I'm on post nobody goes through me."

It was a sturdy declaration, and Saywood eyed his man more critically than ever before. The more thoroughly he knew him, the better.

"There are men in the hills yonder," suggested the officer.

"Plenty of them. Horses, too, I reckon. Leastwise, we have missed some four-footers now and then."

"So I've heard."

Griffen bored at his master with keen eyes, seeming to study how much he could say without being reproved.

"We have had our vexations here," he pursued. "Away back East a horse is a four-cornered animal to prance about on ag a monkey would ride a stick, but here, every horse is treasure, gold, life. Where could we go without them? Start, and we would starve on the way. Oh! they are what I said, life! But we've lost piles of them."

"How far do you think they have gone?"

"Well, sir, if I was a horse-thief and hid them in the hills yonder to escape being caught at it, I should keep gathering bunches until I had a fair-sized lot, burning away the Government brands, and then ship them away by a few of my helpers. But, sir, until a bunch was gathered in, I should hide them with me in them hills."

Officer and trooper gazed at each other like two men reading each his book. Both had shown caution, but they had gained confidence in each other.

"Do you," Saywood asked, "think there are horses now over there?"

"Unless there has been a late shipment, yes, sir."

"Griffen, I'd like to find those horses and those who stole them," said the Lieutenant plainly.

"Sir, I'd like to help you," declared Griffen.

Master and man smiled at each other, and the trooper suddenly smote his hands together.

"There has been an epidemic of stealing hereabouts," he added. "We are an isolated, forlorn post, and that is partly why we lose so many things. Thieves riot over there, thick as bees, or else each one of a few is mighty active. This post loses things on the trails outside. Start a pack-train for any purpose whatever and there is liable to be something lost—horses, saddles, blankets, food, weapons—even money. Paymasters have been held up before now."

"So I have been told. Briefly, there is a gang that hides in the hills and preys upon our uniformed brethren."

"And never gets caught. Look, ye, sir—excuse me—but men here say you are crafty at trail-following. The right man has come to Fort Despair. He has been needed. He's here. You're the man. I am no fool at trailing, myself, and if you ever want me at your heels in a try, sir, why, I'd eat my heart out with joy to have a lick at them knaves over there."

"Can you carry a still tongue, Griffen?"

"I can, and I'm going to do it now."

"In that case, maybe the desired chance will come. But, see here, others have failed to do what we aim to accomplish, and we don't want our predecessors to laugh if we fail. Make no confidants, Griffen."

"I'll not confide in a living soul, sir."

"Good! Our game is to lie low until we see the day and the hour for our try. Then—we will try!"

The trooper's eyes sparkled with satisfaction, but he read in the officer's manner that the point was settled for the time being, and he knew when to stop talking. He added a word or two and stopped.

After he had left the room Saywood fell into thought. The depredations of the gang in the hills had been a pest to the garrison for two years. Hiding in tangled areas, they always seemed to be about when plunder was to be had. Then they struck secretly, silently, but successfully, and the Government was minus a horse or some other valuable. And they had never been caught.

Captain Relford, in telling his new

"He wouldn't fit a great while."

chief aid of this matter, had explained his previous unsuccessful attempts, and, falling into passion, had come as near to profanity as his dignified nature would permit. Others had told, too, and Saywood had harbored a purpose that had only been given force by Griffen's advances.

Now, he intended to wage war upon the thieves, though the work must wait his convenience. Garrison duties stood first. Then, according to his plan, he would hunt for the thieves, but as Captain Relford had failed to unearth them, time, patience, and skill were necessary.

Meanwhile he had been learning the hills, and mapping them as he rode day by day. Now, he smiled faintly as he recalled the looks of wonder on the faces of his companion troopers as he sat on his horse and penciled the charts. The soldiers knew something about maps, but it had been new to them to see their Lieutenant sit ten minutes here and ten there, and, eyeing the ridges and depressions at times, mark long and carefully upon his paper. Maps of the wild hills seemed to amuse them.

Thinking of the charts, Saywood, having swallowed his final bite of the occasion, now went to his sleeping-room and ran his hand up to the closet shelf where he kept the results of his work. A surprise followed. The charts were gone.

Confident that he had not misplaced them, and almost equally sure that Griffen had not meddled, he nevertheless made a thorough search among his few belongings. The desired articles were not there. As he abandoned the hunt, an idea suddenly occurred to the Lieutenant.

"I am not so sure," he murmured, "that the night thief went away empty-handed!"

Another period of meditation.

"But what could anybody want of my drawings?"

It was a mystery, and after a vain attempt to penetrate the maze he went outside. Griffen was raking the graveled walk, and had brought it to a point where it approached perfection. The earth was smooth and fastidiously arranged from end to end.

"I will ask you to defer labor for now, Griffen, and come with me. I may need you for an errand," he said.

The striker responded promptly and put his rake away, after which they left the premises together.

Saywood had business with the Adjutant, and he was at the office for half an hour, going over sundry official papers with that officer. They then discovered that another paper was needed, but had been left behind by the Lieutenant. He started to get it, noticing as he left that Griffen was standing a few rods distant, talking with another trooper.

As Saywood neared his house he saw Estelle Relford standing by the gate of her father's residence. The Captain's daughter had pleased the newcomer's eye from the time he reached the post. She was young, slight, daintily garbed, and fair of face. If she was out of place in dismal Fort Despair, that garrison had not lessened her beauty nor destroyed her woman's inclination to make herself presentable. Now, she greeted Saywood with a friendly smile.

"Still zealously intent on duty!" she said, lightly. "Verily, I believe you are the only man here who knows how to hurry."

"Bad habits cling fast," he replied jestingly.

"The suns of Arizona will ultimately shrivel up the sin of haste."

"But not kill it. Report says that all troopers here used haste when the Apaches were on the warpath."

"True, true! I know, because I was here, on a vacation from school. There was haste, fast riding, long gallops after the foe. The troopers used haste, and it was my father who led them."

"The entire West bears testimony to Captain Relford's distinguished services on that occasion."

"He served with his whole heart in the work, tirelessly, loyally."

The daughter paid the tribute well and deservedly, but not with the animation to be expected. Her speech was slow, and her expression impressed the Lieutenant as actually sad. No doubt, he meditated, she recalled the sufferings of the troopers, and could not cast off the natural pity for their work in that wild war.

"Fame has him in its keeping, Miss Relford."

"And, meanwhile, the Government retains him at this obscure post—but let that pass. It is not my place to complain, where he sounds no word of discontent. I'll let that drop. I suppose, Mr. Saywood, you have not found out more about the night prowler?"

"Not a thing."

"Father will attend to that. He is unusually skilful at unraveling mysteries. I have not mentioned it to him, today, but my recollection is that he asked you not to speak of the affair to any one not already knowing to it?"

"That is correct."

"And you have said nothing?"

"Not a word."

"Thank you for that!" she exclaimed, with fervor he could not understand. "The disturbance was vexatious enough, but to have the whole garrison talking about it—you will keep it secret, won't you, sir?"

With her hands upon the pickets of the fence she leaned forward, her expression puzzlingly anxious, her great gray eyes looking searchingly into his own. If the point had been far more important she could not have evinced more eagerness to assure herself that her wishes would be heeded. Saywood was rather bewildered.

"Until Captain Relford relieves me of the imposed seal of silence I shall say nothing," he replied readily.

"Thank you, thank you again! You are very kind! Of course," and a sudden, bright smile took the place of the former anxiety, "it ought not to seem momentous to me, but I dislike garrison gossip. Wherever charity may begin, it does not flourish in a Government post nor abide there. From which you may say I am over-fastidious—but never mind, I'll relieve you of the necessity of saying it. Call it my whim. Also, please pardon me for stopping an officer who is in haste. That should not be the way of the Commandant's daughter. For now, good-by!"

Nodding her shapely head and smiling charmingly, she stepped back a pace, and as Saywood could not linger when official work called, he passed on and entered his own premises.

"There are footsteps outside!"

The girl had perplexed him, and he so fell into thought that, instead of going to the front door, he moved along the walk that led to the rear until his downturned gaze flashed a discovery upon him.

In the walk which Griffen had raked so elaborately were now three footprints where somebody had crossed it, and they were those of a trimly-shod woman. More than that, the heel-prints were toward his rear door.

Perhaps there was no reason why this should impress him, but it was a period where footprints were masterful, and the slender tracks carried unusual weight. Without seeming to notice them, and finding that the turf beyond baffled further trailing, he went far enough to see that the rear door was fast, and then turned about and entered the house by the front way.

The document he had wanted to exhibit at the Adjutant's office was on the shelf in his room, and he went there at once. He was about to reach for it when he noticed something else, a something resting by its side. He looked at the coarse paper, reached, and took it down. His missing maps of the hills were back again.

He stared at them blankly, puzzled afresh, even bewildered. How had the return been accomplished? He had left the house locked, yet, while he was away, some one had restored the charts to their place. That meant that somebody had entered—he started as he remembered the footprints in the gravel of the walk.

Time passed as he stood staring at the recovered sheets, but he could not permit too much to elapse. His place then was at the office. Slowly he returned the maps to the shelf, and then shifted his grasp and pulled down the document wanted by the Adjutant.

As he did so another paper that had been lying at the top fluttered to the floor. He picked it up. It was the note of warning so mysteriously received while he was at Cutlip, on his way to the post. There seemed no known reason why he should read it again then, but certain words seemed to rise from the paper and drill their way into his mind.

"If you have regard for your life, do not go to Fort Despair. Turn back! Once there you will be enveloped in conditions you cannot understand. Those who seem to be your best friends will be your worst enemies, mystery will be about you, thick and strange——"

Saywood broke off in his reading and tossed the letter back upon the shelf.

"Nonsense!" he muttered impatiently.

But, as he was leaving the room, he turned and went to the window. From that point he looked down upon the slight footprints in the walk.

"I wender," he mused, "whose feet made them?"

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

Tactful Musicians.

An article in an Italian review contains an interesting story of Liszt and Rubini, the tenor. They were touring together and visited a town where, from the preliminaries which had been arranged, great things were expected. But they were disappointed, for when they entered the hall they found only fifty persons present. Rubini was furious, and said he would not sing, but Liszt calmed him. "You must sing," he said; "this small audience is evidently composed of musical connoisseurs of the town, so we should treat them with respect." Liszt set the example with a grand overture, and Rubini sang to perfection. Liszt gave another piece and then addressed the audience.

Liszt as an orator was as tactful as he had been in the role of pacificator. Addressing his audience of fifty, he said: "Ladies and gentlemen"—there was only one lady present—"I think that you have had enough music. Allow me to ask you to take a little supper with us." After a few seconds the invitation was accepted, and Liszt and Rubini entertained the audience at supper at their hotel, which cost them twelve hundred francs. When the guests separated, the hosts thought the affair had been a joke, about which nothing more would be heard, but they decided to give their concert as advertised on the following night. To their astonishment the hall was packed. There was not standing room. The whole town had turned out on the off chance of an invitation to supper.

Ready Answer.

One of our contemporaries tells a new story about J. L. Orr, who was Speaker of the National House before the War. He was staying at the Warm Springs, and had been singing one evening in the public room of the hotel, runs a story in the Richmond Times-Dispatch. After a while one of the other guests rose and walked, limpingly, across the room. Mr. Orr at once followed him, and asked if he were not the chaplain at the University of Virginia at such a time, naming a year. The man replied that he was. "I was then," said Mr. Orr, "a student of the university, and I knew you by your limp." "Well," said the minister, "it seems my limping made a deeper impression on you than my preaching." Mr. Orr was not embarrassed at all by the predicament in which he had been put. "Ah, Doctor," he exclaimed, "it is the highest compliment we can pay a minister to say that he is known by his walk rather than by his conversation."

Often the man who believes in himself is too credulous.

A Sweetheart's Secret

Or, THE HOUSE ON THE MARSH

By T. C. HARBAUGH

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Begun in No. 32, August 10. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, of by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER V.
THE SOMNAMBULIST.

THE inquest which was held at Marshedge proved a disappointment to more than one person. Constable Bobbs, the fat little man with the grass-green eyes, was visibly put out. The coroner's jury, composed for once of fair-minded men, came to the conclusion that Trajan Marshall met his death at the hands of some person unknown to it. I was called before this wonderful body, which was presided over by the lean squire, and questioned by the rural Sherlock Holmes, but I kept within my heart the scene I had witnessed on the marsh-way the night of the crime, and not from my lips came a word that might inculpate Claudia.

Miss Mossy Phipps was the most versatile witness. She wanted to tell more than she knew, but her manner did not weigh with the jury, and she left the chair with a visible pout. When the inquest had adjourned, I rubbed elbows with the renowned Bobbs.

"Noodles!" said he, with a glance in my direction.

"Do you refer to the jury?"

"Why not?" he returned. "There are circumstances about this case which should have caused a different verdict. A man is found dead in his own house, he is stabbed by a slender blade and died before he could resist his murderer. You saw nothing that night?"

It was a challenge.

"Nothing," I lied, with a glibness which must have startled the functionary.

He rubbed his fat hands and looked toward the sea.

"We'll get at the facts later on. What are your future intentions, Mr. Marshall?"

"I shall remain at Marshedge."

"Oh, I thought perhaps you might go away."

"Why should I go?" I exclaimed, looking him squarely in the green eyes.

"Yes, I understand that the will has not been found, and yet one should exist."

"I know nothing about my uncle's will."

"Of course not," and his tone was distrustful. I felt that the time was coming when I should cross swords with this man.

"I assure you," said I, in rasping tones, "that I will do all in my power to unearth the will, if one exists."

Without replying he turned on his heel and stepped into the trap that had brought him to Marshedge. I was glad to get rid of the pompous nuisance, and watched him with unfeigned glee as he rode off.

It was the night after the burial that I entered the library, intending to search it thoroughly for the missing document. It was the most natural thing in the world that my uncle should have left a will, for he had been the most methodical of men, and had a large estate at his disposal. I was the only living relative so far as I knew, for his only child, a son, had been lost at sea, and I was the only child of his only brother.

I closed the door noiselessly behind me and lighted the lamp to aid me in my search. The house was still, for it was nearly midnight, and the only sound that came to my ears was the roar of the sea beyond the old marsh.

Setting to work at once I opened the chest which contained my uncle's private papers. These were arranged in bundles each with the proper data, and gave me but little trouble. He seemed to have kept every letter he had received for twenty years, and I remembered one which I had written him from Florence when I was in dire straits. It was an appeal for help, and I had closed the letter with lines which I regretted after I had mailed it. The two lines had lingered in my mind all those years, for they ran as follows:

"I am your brother's son, and some day, if you do not assist me, I shall return and have it out with you."

It was a threat, but was not intended in a manner which some might regard it. Thoughts of personal violence had never entered my head, for my uncle in the balmy days had been kind to me. I simply intended to upbraid him for his lack of generosity, but long before I turned my face homeward I had repudiated the words I had written in a moment of despair.

To find this letter and consign it to the flames was my intention, and I searched eagerly for it in the bundles of correspondence which I unearthed from the chest. At last I found the envelope, and my heart gave a responsive leap. What was my chagrin when I discovered that the envelope was empty. Had my uncle destroyed my foolish letter in a moment of forgiveness? I could not bring myself to think so. Some one had stolen the letter, and even now it might be in the near-by shadows ready to be thrown into my teeth by the enemies I had.

Cursing my ill luck, I went back to the will. The chest revealed it not, and I began to look elsewhere. There was a little cabinet set deftly in the wall, but I found it locked. With my knife

She was a somnambulist.

I tampered with the old-fashioned lock till it yielded with a snap, and I threw the mahogany door wide. I was about to thrust my hand into the cabinet when a slight noise startled me. In an instant I had turned around, and a thrill went through me as I beheld Mossy Phipps in the doorway.

The girl was clad in her night robes, which trailed at her stockinged feet, and when I saw the singular expression on her face I drew back with a little shiver of horror. She was a somnambulist! The eyes were wide open, yet they saw not, and when she advanced across the room I stepped aside and fixed my gaze upon her. Phipps was a pretty girl of seventeen, with her wealth of Titian hair which was now disheveled, falling to her shapely shoulders, and while I stared at her I did not wonder that she had caught such a man as John Groves.

The room seemed to grow stiller and the light appeared to assume a ghostlike gleam, as if some spirit had invaded it from the unseen world. She remained at the door for a minute, and then moved noiselessly toward me. I recoiled again.

She went over to the chest and raised the lid. I saw her run her hand among the contents, but all at once she rose to her feet and came toward the cabinet.

It was a small receptacle, consisting of three shelves and several pigeonholes. My lips gave utterance to a half-stifled cry when I saw the sleepwalker take from the cabinet a folded paper and thrust it into her bosom. The act was performed in the twinkling of an eye.

The girl closed the door of the cabinet and turned away. I saw her leave the room before I could collect my scattered senses. Had she found the will?

I sprang forward and rushed out into the hall. Phipps was passing from the house, still under the strange spell that held her in its grip. I glided at her heels. There were grotesque shadows among the trees on the lawn, for the moon had risen out of the tumultuous sea, and I could see her distinctly. I resolved to see the end of the adventure and, holding my breath, I kept her in view.

Across the lawn she went to the gate, which opened into the garden, at the end of which ran the road upon which I had seen Claudia with the light. The wind was high and played with the girl's thin robes, tossing them about her feet, and toying with her tresses. Once in the road she went down it, and suddenly turned aside in the direction of the hunting lodge where I had had my last interview with Claudia. At the entrance to the lodge she paused and looked back, as if she had overcome the spell and feared pursuit. She parted the drooping vines, and I saw her plunge into the little bower, shutting herself from my gaze.

"Ah," thought I. "I shall rob you, Mossy Phipps, and your sleep-walking shall redown to my fortunes."

A clump of alders with their tops as green as the heaving sea stood at one side of the lodge, and in a moment I was ensconced behind it. When Phipps should emerge I would enter and search the place, for I doubted not that she had come hither to conceal that which she had taken from the cabinet in the library. The girl, however, seemed to be trying my patience, for the moments seemed to become hours, and I cursed my long vigil.

At the end of half an hour the vines parted. I drew back and looked with all eyes. Phipps came out, holding her head as haughtily as at the inquest, and I saw the expressionless eyes that rested in her head. Away she went, tripping over the gravel, but making no sound. I had no use for Mossy Phipps now. She had led me to my quarry, and that was enough.

Letting her go, I turned to the lodge. In a moment I was inside amid the dense gloom that prevailed there. It was useless to search in the dark. Taking a lucifer from my pocket, I produced a light, and as the tiny flame flared up I held it forward and looked around. There were few secretive places within the lodge, and I anticipated no difficulty in unearthing what Phipps had carried to it. Round and round the place I went, poking my light everywhere. My search seemed useless.

Perhaps, after all, Phipps had not deposited her find in the lodge, but had carried it away with her. But no! Something seemed to peer at me from a spot where roof and wall met, and with a little ejaculation I sprang toward the corner. My hand closed on something. It was a folded paper, but a great deal thicker than I had expected. There was something concealed among the folds, something heavy at one end but lighter at the other.

With bated breath I lit a new match and laid it on the rustic bench to burn there whilst I investigated. With unfeigned eagerness I opened the heavy paper and uttered a cry. No wonder. Before me lay a dagger with a long slender blade, and the steel had upon its surface dark spots which made me shudder. I had found the assassin's weapon!

CHAPTER VI.
TWO OF A KIND.

The reader may imagine, if he can, the sensations produced by the weapon which gleamed in the light of my match. It was a beautiful specimen of the dagger maker's art. The polished hilt of black ivory, tipped off by a gem of no great value, the almost snow-white blade, the needle-like point, and the tracings of delicate work along the steel. I had seen such things, but not in this country. I remembered seeing them in a shop in the Bois de Rennert, and even then I shuddered to think how quickly they could perform a murderer's work.

As I thrust the dagger and its wrappings into my pocket the light went out, and once more I was left in darkness. What phantasm of the brain had compelled the beautiful sleep-walker to rob the cabinet of such grewsome relics I could not imagine. What had taken Mossy Phipps to the library where her hand had found the blade was a mystery too deep for me, and what had goaded her to conceal it in the hunting lodge was another. Would she return in her waking moments and hide it elsewhere, or would the passing of her singular action deprive her of such doings even if she had such a thought in her mind?

By this time she was back in the old house, and I followed slowly, my mind combatting the puzzle which confronted it. In my room came back to me thoughts of Claudia. She had not been seen since the night of the tragedy. Probably she was now far away with her secret, if she had one, and I was compelled to believe she had. If not, why had she left me so abruptly at the lodge, bidding me a hasty good night when I referred to her whereabouts that night?

A sudden shower followed my return. When it passed the moon shone once more over marsh and sea, and I went to the window to take in the weird landscape that lay beyond.

I could imagine Phipps snugly ensconced in her bed after her nocturnal enterprise. The fiancee of John Groves! I could not believe that he had ensnared her, for he was a bulky lout, not prepossessing, and a man of violent passions. That the delicate Phipps should take up with her direct opposite almost drew a smile to my face when I thought of it. He had boasted of their engagement, had flamed up when I referred to the girl's Titian tresses as though she were already his wife.

I would have given much if Claudia had come in sight in the road below, but the girl was conspicuous by her absence.

"She shall not elude me always!" I exclaimed. "I will find her, and she shall tell me why she came back that terrible night."

Almost suddenly a man sulked out of the shadows of the bushes. The moon shone fairly on his person, and from the first he attracted my attention. There was but one person like him. I had already made up my mind that Brutus Bobbs, the constable, had no double. There he was, his roly-poly figure distinctly in view and his round, piggish-like face turned toward the house. I drew back and quietly watched him.

The very essence of meanness was in this man. He would have entrapped me at the inquest if he could. He would have thrown around me the net of guilt, but he had failed. Was he working for fame, or was he in the employ of some one? When he came toward the house, I left my room and went noiselessly to the lower floor. I was minded to confront the intruder and peremptorily order him from the place

The shower had moistened the walk which led to the house, and, to my surprise, I saw Brutus Bobbs stooped over it and looking at something in the soft ground. The next moment he took a measuring stick from his pocket, and was taking the dimensions of what he had discovered. The thought that he was measuring my foottracks flashed through my mind. In another moment I heard the squeaking of a door, and the constable was joined by John Groves.

"Birds of a feather," thought I, as I gazed at the well-mated pair.

Bobbs pointed downward at the signs in the earth and nodded to his companion. I put ear at the window and listened.

"It looks like it," I heard John say.

"It's convincing proof," returned Bobbs. "He was out this very night, and I would swear to it on a stack of Bibles."

"I didn't hear him go out."

"Of course you didn't. He wouldn't leave the house with a brass band. Such men don't go that way."

"That's a living fact."

"Now look here, Groves. You're my friend, ain't you?"

"I am, Mr. Bobbs."

"Well, keep this little secret. There'll be something doing at Marshedge before long."

"It can't happen any too soon for me."

"By the way," said Bobbs, leaning toward the servant, "have you found the will yet?"

"No."

"But you've looked?"

"Everywhere," asseverated Groves.

"Mebbe there isn't such a document."

"Yes, there is. I was a witness."

"Oh!" and the constable straightened. "Who wrote it, Groves?"

"Old Lawyer Martin what died a year ago."

"Then it is somewhere about the house."

"It might be, but Mr. Marshall was a strange man, and——"

"No, he wasn't fool enough to tear it up," broke in Bobbs. "He did some many things, but as to tearing up his own will, that wasn't his way. Mebbe he got hold of it," and the constable threw a glance toward the house.

"Well," drawled Groves, "if he did, and it wasn't to his notion, it is lost forever."

"Groves, do you know what that will is worth to us if it is found?"

"I don't think he remembered me."

"I don't mean that," put in Bobbs, quickly. "It's worth a cool thousand if we turn it up."

"To you and me?"

"To no one else."

"Who will pay the thousand?" demanded the avaricious Groves.

"I'm naming no names just now," was the reply, in mysterious tones. "Find the will, and I'll divide fairly."

"I'll try," was the reply, and a minute later the two worthies separated and John turned back toward the house.

I heard him enter by a side door and presently the sound of footsteps in the hall assailed my inner ear. The lock of the library clicked distinctly, and my gorge rose without an effort. The man Groves was in the room across the hall.

I opened the door of the chamber whither I had gone, and tiptoed acoss the corridor. Already there was a glimmer of light in the library. John Groves was my master in strength, and I was unarmed, for I had left the ivory-hilted dagger in my room.

Noiselessly turning the knob before me, I opened the door and looked into the apartment beyond. At first I saw nothing of the servant, but all at once I caught sight of him before the

mahogany cabinet. The light was between me and his enormous bulk. Engaged in the work that had brought him to the library, he heard me not, and, watching him like a hawk, I glided forward and looked over his shoulders.

"Hang it all!" I heard him say. "I can't find it. I saw the master put it in here and——"

"But it doesn't seem to be there now."

Groves whirled upon me with the snarl of a wolf. His eyes almost blazed.

"You?" he cried, when he got his breath. "What's your business here?"

"What's yours?" I met him with. "What does my uncle's cabinet possess of interest to you?"

The snarl increased. John Groves backed away until he had the table at his back.

"Don't you remember the advice I gave you the night before the inquest? And you're going to remain, eh?"

I knew that the only way to meet this man was steel to steel.

"I remember distinctly. You haven't found the will, I see?"

"What is it to you, Roland Marshall?" he snapped. "I'm looking for no will."

"You lie!"

It seemed that Groves increased an inch in stature before the words had left my lips. He edged from the table and glared at me with the mien of a jungle tiger.

"I allow no man to throw such words at me!" he cried.

"You caught them fairly in your teeth, didn't you?"

"Oh, well," he hissed, "I won't rob the gallows! They'll get their due before long. Some think it was the girl, Claudia, who did it, but we don't."

"We?"

"Bobbs and me," he laughed. "The girl was here that night good enough, for Phipps can't be mistaken."

I couldn't repress the words that bubbled to my lips.

"Does Phipps ever walk in her sleep?" I asked, and his color instantly changed.

"What if she does?"

"Well, she walked thus tonight. She was in this room and took something from yon cabinet. It wasn't the will, Groves. It was the dagger that killed my uncle. Did you expect to find it yonder?"

For a moment I thought the man's limbs would give way beneath him, but with a Herculean effort he pulled himself together and threshed the air with his hands. "It's a lie! an infamous lie!" he roared, "and I'll make you pay for it one o' these days!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE WHITE MICE.

After the departure of John Groves I realized that I had enemies who would leave no stone unturned to fasten the murder of my Uncle Trajan upon me. I could see the fine hand of Brutus Bobbs, the constable, in it, and knew that he had an ally in the servant whom I had encountered in the library.

This, however, did not distract me so much as the missing will. I had no reason to believe that I was in any part an heir according to that document, but I had reason to think that it had vanished in the interest of some person. The lawyer who had drawn up the paper was in his grave and his lips were sealed forever. Did John Groves know the contents of the will, and had he sought the library for the purpose of looking for it, or for the dagger which I had seen Mossy Phipps take from the cabinet? Which?

The continued mystery of Claudia puzzled me not a little, but the dagger now came in for its full share of attention. I thought, as I returned to my room after seeing the vanishing form of Groves, of confronting the somnambulistic Miss Phipps, but from what I had already seen of her, especially at the inquest, I realized that I would find in her an antagonist worthy of my keenest steel.

The events of the last few hours brought on a sleepless night. Until dawn I heard at all times the voice of the sea. Eager to seek other scenes, I repaired as early as possible to the little diningroom, where I was met by Jenkins, another servant, who pointed to my plate as she bade me good morning. She was a different creature from Phipps, and as I seated myself she said in a kindly voice:

"I thought I would leave it under your plate Mr. Roland, and not waken you."

I lifted my plate and found on the cloth a letter which was without postmark or stamp.

"Who brought this?" I inquired, as I took up the letter and glanced at the girl.

"I do not know. It was found in the hall this morning, as if it had been slipped underneath the door.

"Thank you, Jenkins."

Although I was eager to break the seal of the letter, I placed it in my pocket and finished my breakfast. Five minutes later I was some distance from the house among the trees which grew in a little grove not far from the reeds of the marsh.

I sat down on a rustic bench and drew forth the missive. A glance told me that the communication was brief, and in a moment I had mastered it, for it ran as follows:

"Friend of my Girlhood:—Will you, can you forgive me, Roland? I was distraught and my mind was not under control at the lodge. Do not seek to know more, but forgive me. Oh, that terrible night! What I had suffered at the hands of your uncle made me an exile. From your words I believe you saw me at Marshedge that night. Let me confess that I was there, but seek to know no more. I shall go away, and if ever we meet again, may it be under different circumstances. The dead is dead, and I would give the world if I had not gone back that night. Let the dread secret be mine, Roland. CLAUDIA."

The letter nearly fell from my hands when I reached the last word, and staring blankly before me, I gasped.

"Claudia!" I cried, from the depths of my soul. "Forgive you? Yes, a thousand times. But I will find you. I will not pause till I have looked once more into your eyes and seen therein the light of happier days."

No sooner had I returned to my room than a knock sounded on my door. I turned and opened it, to come face to face with a man whom I had never seen. He bowed stiffly and entered, looking at me from the grayish depths of the only eye he had—a wiry little man with sloping shoulders, and rather repulsive. I held the door open as I regarded him, and did not close it till he had complacently seated himself.

"Mr. Roland Marshall, I believe?" said he, and his voice seemed the only thing he possessed that was alluring, for it was strangely musical.

"I am Roland Marshall, and you——"

"I happen to be Theophilus Brawn," he interrupted. "You don't know me, and perhaps you are to be congratulated on your ignorance. I'm a plucked pigeon, Mr. Marshall, hardly a pinfeather left." He looked it. "I manage to pick up a scant living in a singular manner. I exhibit my performing mice. Let me show you."

He dived one hand into a capacious pocket and produced a small box, which he opened. It was a deftly constructed cage in which were three white mice, which raced out on the table at word of command. Seeking another pocket the plucked pigeon produced little ladders, hurdles, and the like, which he set up before him. For ten minutes the little animals performed all sorts of tricks, climbing the ladders, jumping the hurdles, and dancing like marionettes.

I looked on with much curiosity. Why the man should have come to Marshedge with such an outfit was puzzling in the extreme. Besides this, he knew my name, and this was another mystery.

"Now, to business," said he, as he recaged his performing mice. "My mice are but the overture. You're in trouble, Mr. Marshall?"

"I?"

"You. I'm gifted with mysterious powers, even if I am a plucked bird. I can hypnotize myself, a wonderful gift. I will now go into a trance, and you can ask me any question bearing on your trouble. Oh, don't be skeptical! I'm a seventh son. Now, go ahead."

To my utter surprise the man leaned back in his chair and became almost instantly rigid. The lone eye appeared to sleep though it did not close. I was inclined to laugh, but suddenly resolved to take Mr. Theophilus Brawn at his word.

I took a step nearer, and said in a low tone: "Where is Claudia?"

For the briefest moment the face remained rigid, but all at once it relaxed.

"Claudia is at the Burnt House," came the reply.

"Where is that?"

"It is at the end of the long walk."

"You must enlighten me. I know no long walk."

"Give me a pencil."

In a moment I had complied, and he leaned toward the table. I placed a sheet of paper underneath his hand. He drew strange lines upon it, and I breathlessly followed the tracings of the lead.

"There!" said he, without looking up. "You follow the long walk till you come to the sea. Turn to the right, and keep in that direction till you find the Burnt House. Claudia is there."

"One thing more," cried I, catching my breath.

"Be quick."

"Who killed my uncle, Trajan Marshall?"

The answer nearly threw me off my feet.

"The woman," said the ashen lips.

"Do you see her?"

"Yes, but dimly."

"Tell me all."

"It is night. The woman steals into the room. It is a library, for I see the books. I see the old man in his chair. He is writing. Now he has sealed a letter. The woman is coming up behind him. She has a dagger in her hand. She slips to the old man's side. He raises his head and looks at her. Her hand pushes his head back into the depths of the chair. The blade is lifted and comes down like a thunderbolt. He cries out, and the word is suddenly stilled."

"What is the word?" I exclaimed.

"It is 'Claudia!'"

I reeled away with a cry torn from the innermost depths of my soul.

"It is false! false!" I exclaimed. "It was not Claudia. You are a base villain."

In another moment the man was himself again. I took a coin from my pocket and cast it upon the table. He swept it into his possession with an eager movement.

"Don't ask me more," said he. "I forget what I told you, for now I am just Theophilus Brawn, the plucked pigeon. Good morning, Mr. Marshall. I hope you got value received for your coin. Should we ever meet again——"

"If we do I'll strangle you!" cried I.

A grin suffused his face.

"You took me at my word, sir," he exclaimed, with some resentment. "I get my living in two ways, with my white mice and my strange powers. I'm no charlatan, sir. My father was an officer in the English army and he fell at Sebastapol. I——"

"The door is yonder!" I broke in, my gorge rising till I felt my blood on fire. "Get out, reptile! If you remain here another moment I'll be inclined to carry out my threat of a minute ago. It's not the first time I've made a fool of myself."

He looked at me and got upon his feet.

"Go!" I thundered, taking a step toward him. He sullenly obeyed.

When he reached the door, he paused with his hand on the knob. His face was turned toward me.

"Sometimes my patrons go too far," said he, with the old grin coming back. "They obtain information they don't want. Curiosity, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways. My mice are named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and——"

I broke his sentence with a sudden bound and an oath parted my lips.

"I'm sorry, sorry, Mr. Marshall," he said. "But remember that my gift never errs. It is all your fault. You wanted to know too much," and with this the man went down the stair, and, looking from the window, I saw him crossing the lawn with the utmost composure.

I rated him the king of charlatans, but the time was coming when I was to acknowledge his startling powers.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLOW FALLS.

To go or not to go was the dilemma that now confronted me. Was I to put credence in the revelations of the man with the white mice? I had always fought shy of such "powers," but there was something in his statement which gave wings to curiosity. Claudia had said in her brief note that she was going away, and yet Theophilus Brawn had declared, whilst in his self-inflicted trance, that she was at the Burnt House. I debated with myself all the next day, but love and eagerness got the better of me and nightfall found me going down the road which Brawn had mapped out.

Following the directions I came almost suddenly upon an old-fashioned brick house which suddenly brought back the past. I had seen it in my

"You have come too late!"

youthful days, but I perceived that within late years one of its wings had been burned, hence the appellation of the Burnt House, which it had received.

Going boldly up the walk which led to the structure, I knocked at the door, to have it opened by a mild-mannered, middle-aged lady who looked curiously at me. She stood with arms akimbo while I seated myself, and suddenly broke forth with:

"I see it all now. You are Roland Marshall. I heard you had come back."

"Yes, madam, I am the rolling stone," I answered, with a smile. "I am a seeker after information."

"There is none here, I fear, if you are trying to unravel the mystery of the tragedy at Marshedge."

"We may come to that later on. I am looking for a young lady by the name of Claudia Grenfell."

The woman started visibly.

"You have come too late, I'm sorry to say. She went away last night."

"She was really here, then?"

"Yes, she came several weeks ago, and I gave her shelter. I remember when she had a nice home with your Uncle Trajan. Something happened at Marshedge and she left. I always heard it was a love affair, but not on the girl's part."

"No," said I, with some asperity. "My uncle wanted her to mate with a man whom she did not love, and Claudia fled."

"When the wedding trousseau had been purchased," cried the woman. "It is not often girls do that."

"When did she come back?" I inquired, ignoring her last words.

"It was about a week before the murder. I did not ask her where she had been, for that was not my business. I was a girl once myself, and perhaps if I were in Claudia's shoes I would have acted as she did."

"She left no inkling of whither she was going?"

"None at all. She just went."

Lost again! I was at my wits' end.

"You have been home some time, and the wonder is that you did not seek her before now."

"I did not learn that she was here till last night," and there I stopped, for to go further would be to explain that I had taken stock in Brawn's mysterious powers.

"Would you let me see the room which Claudia occupied?" I suddenly asked.

"There's no harm in my doing that, I'm sure," she smiled, and led the way to an upper room which looked out over the fringe of the marsh and gave me a glimpse of the sea.

"Maybe you'd like to remain here a spell," the woman went on. "You can stay as long as you like."

With this she closed the door, and I heard her feet on the stair. Left to myself, I sat down and looked around. It was a neat little apartment, tidied by just such hands as I knew Claudia had. Everything was in order, and as my gaze wandered from spot to spot I felt a certain loneliness which overcame me. All at once I noticed something lying on the table, and the next moment I held it in my hand. It was a half-withered rose, one of the first of the season, and reverently I pressed it to my lips. I knew that she had plucked it, that perhaps in her moments of adversity she had kissed it, and this thought made it dearer to me. I placed it in my bosom and went back to the chair.

My thoughts reverted to Brawn and his revelations. Had he seen in visions the murder at Marshedge? Had he seen the woman steal into the library and take the old man's life, and was it true that in his dying moments he had looked into the face above him and called out the name of Claudia? But there was the dagger which I had seen Mossy Phipps take from the mahogany cabinet, and which I had found in the hunting lodge where she had placed it during her somnambulistic trance. What did it all mean? If Claudia was guilty—but she was not! No, she had not slain my uncle! Yet why had he cried out her name when sudden death stood in his presence?

When I returned to the lower room I was met by Mrs. Clarke, as she told me her name was.

"I hope it did you good?" she began, in kindly tones.

"Thank you. It was a pleasure to be where Claudia was, though she was not there."

"She's a good girl, I believe. But she did have a fashion of going out nights while she was here."

"Going out nights?" I repeated.

"Yes. I don't know where she went, but she was out the night it happened."

"The tragedy, you mean?"

"Yes. I saw her coming back and heard her go up to her room. It was pretty late, too. I was wide awake, and I heard her crying in her room after she came back. In the morning, though, she was herself again, and I didn't mention the fact that I had heard her."

"No?"

"It wouldn't have been just the thing, you know, for we all have troubles of our own. When I heard whom they wanted the girl to marry I never blamed her that she went away at the last moment."

"Who was the man?" I inquired, though I already knew.

"It was Jason Sellers. Now, I hope I bear no living soul any ill will, but that man! Well, if I had a daughter, I would sooner see her in her grave than the wife of such a person."

Mrs. Clarke spoke with some feeling, and I watched her closely.

"What is the matter with Jason Sellers?"

"You've been away about ten years, haven't you, Mr. Roland?"

"Just ten years."

"Well, during that time Jason Sellers has grown rich. That man will do anything for money. He's grabbed all the

(Continued on page fourteen.)

At Dead of Night

Or, THE PATERNOSTER ENIGMA

By Julian F. Darrow

[Copyright 1912 by W. D. Boyce Co.]
Begun in No. 31, Aug. 3. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER X.
THE WITNESS FOUND.

BLAIR had up to this moment allowed himself to fall into the error that he might relax some of his customary vigilance with regard to the young girl's possible connection with the case, he became positive right then and there that such a condition of things must not be allowed. Undoubtedly the lady hidden behind that thick veil could be no other than Cassie.

It was a pleasant day, and the necessity for a veil was far from apparent. Especially was this the case when the party in question happened to be a pretty young woman; and an actress at that, doubtless fond of advertising herself to the dear public. It had a dubious look, all right, and Blair found himself quivering with new eagerness.

Young Strang, to be sure, did not seem to have the appearance of a guilty conspirator. The detective hurried forward.

Strang, having placed his lady companion safely within the vehicle, stopped to speak to the chauffeur for a moment. And this allowed Blair to gain his point, for had they started off immediately he would have been left at the post.

Strang whirled around when he felt a hand laid on his arm. He even looked a bit bellicose, as though half tempted to offer muscular resistance. Possibly he changed his mind after he had looked into those steady eyes of the unknown party who was interfering with his entering the taxi.

"Well, sir?" he said, a question in his manner.

"Pardon me, but is this Mr. Strang?"

"It is."

"Mr. Willis Strang?"

"What does all this mummery stand for, sir? Do you really want me, or have you come from old Eckstein?"

Blair recognized the well-known name of the proprietor of the place of entertainment where Cassie was nightly appearing to large audiences.

"I have indeed just come from the theater, sir," he remarked, to see how it would be taken.

The other made a hasty gesture, as though he would throw off the detaining hand and plunge into the yawning mouth of the waiting taxi. But Blair only tightened his clutch.

"Just return to him then, and tell him he can go hang. She's going to be Mrs. Willis Strang in half an hour, and all contracts are off!"

Come, this did not sound at all like what one would expect if there were any unholy connivance on the part of the famous young aviator with a guilty assassin. Blair began to realize that what seemed so much like evidence of guilt may have had an entirely different meaning. But he was there to know, and he did not mean to let either of these young persons get away without rendering up a good and sufficient explanation.

"Mr. Strang, I am a detective," he said.

"Oh, you are!"

The tone in which this advocate of the modern aeroplane said this would imply that he cared precious little whether the gentleman chanced to be a detective or a scene-shifter; since he was only interested in the genus of parsons just then, qualified to perform a hasty marriage service.

"I want to have a quiet little talk with you, sir."

"Some other time must do."

"Pardon me, but it will not serve."

"And I repeat that it will have to, since a man must not be bothered while on his wedding journey. Kindly step aside, sir. I would not like to create a scene in so public a place."

"And that is just why I am telling you that you should return with me to a quiet room in the hotel here, so that we can talk together. I have a few questions to ask that must be answered."

"Must, sir?"

"Positively. Is this lady Miss Cassie Newcomb?"

"I told you she will be Mrs. Willis Strang inside half an hour."

"Possibly so. Please step out again, my dear young lady. I hope that I may not have to detain you long."

"You—detain!" gasped the occupant of the taxi, as a head was thrust into view, from which the heavy veil had been swept aside, to disclose a very flushed yet lovely countenance.

"This is more impudence than I can stand for," gritted the young man, clenching his fist and flashing an angry look at the detective.

Blair knew they were perilously near a scene, something he would avoid. He had tried to shape matters so that the listening chauffeur might not hear; but the attitude of Strang, who seemed to be laboring under a misapprehension, prevented him from carrying out his design.

"Listen, Miss Paternoster; something has happened at the Compton!" he observed.

She gave a bubbling little cry, and her lovely eyes at once sought those of her lover.

"My uncle!" she exclaimed, weakly.

"Yes, it is in connection with him."

"Oh! sir, what has happened?"

"Yes, tell us what you mean?" said Strang, but no longer fiercely.

"Mr. Paternoster is no more!"

Again she uttered a feeble little cry.

"Do you mean my uncle is—dead?"

"Yes. Now, will you return with me to the hotel? I may have to detain you for only a brief time; but you must not depart until you have put me in possession of certain facts."

Again they exchanged fearsome looks. Strang realized that the matter had assumed a gravity that would warrant no nonsense.

"Yes, sir, we will go back with you. Chauffeur, wait here for us," he said, as he assisted his companion from the interior of the taxi.

Blair followed them inside. He was not at all conscious of anything approaching the flush of victory, because he saw no sign about the actress to indicate that she knew aught concerning the mysterious death of her uncle.

Suspicious as her intended flight might have appeared at first blush, he could now see that there must be an explanation of it that would put an entirely different face on the whole matter. So he followed them inside.

Entering the reception parlor of the big hotel, they found a small conversation room vacant, for the hour was still early.

"Will this place do, sir?" demanded Strang, not in too pleasant a frame of mind, because his elopement had been delayed, perhaps frustrated, by Fate.

"Admirably. Please be seated, both of you."

The girl's fine eyes were full of shadowy fears, as though she dreaded the worst. Blair did not mean to keep her in suspense longer than was absolutely necessary. So he started in by telling how he had been called upon by his old friend, Tarbox, the superintendent of the Compton, to investigate a strange robbery that had occurred in the big bachelor apartment house on the preceding night.

Then, by rapid degrees, he brought them up to the moment when he and Tarbox burst into the room to find Alexis Paternoster sitting dead in a heap in his chair, with suspicious finger marks about his throat, and the room apparently rifled of many valuables. Cassie shivered, and uttered little inarticulate sounds that possibly stood for horror; indeed, her pretty face was full of varied emotions in which this one stood preeminent.

"Now, Mr. Strang, you can readily understand why, knowing of her late visit to her uncle on the part of this young lady, I desired to see her. It must have been a matter of more than ordinary importance that brought her into a building where she knew women were absolutely debarred after sundown," he went on.

"It was," replied the young man, positively.

"Perhaps you had an interest also in her mission?"

"I certainly had," replied Strang, with a quick look toward the girl.

"I supposed as much, from certain words she was heard to say when she rejoined you. As nearly as they could be repeated to me they were: 'It was a hard job, Willis, but I succeeded. It is all right!' "

The man uttered a cry. Evidently he recognized what terrible significance even innocent words may assume at times.

"You will understand what she meant when you hear the nature of the errand that took her to her uncle at such an hour. He was unable to keep his engagement, and bade her come to him."

"I understand that already. Tarbox informed me."

"But what does all this mean, sir?" said Cassie, in her turn. "Surely no one would suspect that I might raise a hand against the dearest uncle in the world, and one who had given me so much. He was perfectly well, save for his gout, when he said good night to me."

"Will we have to take your own unsupported word for that, Miss Cassie, or could you prove it with other evidence?" Blair asked, quickly.

"I do not know—Mr. Strang was downstairs; but, oh, I forgot. There was Adolphus!"

"The night elevator boy—what of him?"

"Why, my uncle hobbled with me to the car, and put me aboard, speaking to Adolphus and bribing him with a five-dollar bill not to betray Mr. Tarbox, who had allowed me to break the strict rules of the house. Adolphus will tell you he talked with Uncle Alexis!"

CHAPTER XI.
TWO IN A TAXI.

"Yes," put in the excited Strang, "ask Adolphus; he'll tell you. Cassie spoke to me about that little bribe on his part. She was boasting of how her uncle knew just what to do in an emergency. Adolphus wanted money to play craps; Adolphus knew something of importance; and five dollars settled him."

"Bully for Adolphus, then! He's apt to prove of more importance in this matter than at one time appeared possible," remarked the detective.

"For, of course, if the old gentleman had already expired, he was hardly likely to accompany Cassie to the elevator and talk with the coon," said Willis, his face once more beaming with satisfaction.

"That goes without saying. You can understand, though, that it had an ugly look, sir," observed Blair.

"I admit it."

"But any one who knew me would never, never think I could lift a hand against my poor uncle, who had been so good to me," wailed Cassie, still tearful.

"True enough, miss, but the law does not take account of what passes among friends. Circumstantial evidence has done a lot of damage in times past; so that, after all, you have good cause to bless the courtesy that impelled Mr. Paternoster, lame as he was with his gout, to hobble, as you say, to the elevator, simply because he would not have you slipping down those spooky stairs again."

"Indeed I feel that I have. And to think that it was his very last act of kindness to me!"

"There, don't give way so, darling; for even this catastrophe must not interfere with our plans," said Strang, soothing her.

"But, Willis, how can I go with you and be married when I know that my poor uncle is dead?"

"It was his wish, you remember. He always did feel sore that you had bound yourself up in that confounded contract with Eckstein, and suggested flight several times, in order to break it. But you could not go abroad alone; and when I put out a feeler about this marriage, he took to it immediately. Still, there was a big obstacle, and it was to smooth that out you went up to see him last night."

"I assume that you succeeded?" put in the detective, at this point.

"Oh! yes, I convinced uncle that it was the only thing calculated to make Willis agree to give up his terrible business of aeroplaning; and he promised that he would advance the capital to admit him as a partner in an organization making the fliers. He was to bind himself never to go up again in any sort of air craft."

"And that was what you had in mind when you said those significant words?"

"Nothing else, sir. My heart was full of gratitude toward my uncle. Oh! I cannot believe he has gone, when I left him only a few hours ago."

Blair had no trouble in realizing that fact, for if at any time he felt the least skepticism he had only to cast his memory back to the stiffened form he had seen huddled in that chair, and the sightless eyes that seemed to be filled with the horror accompanying a death by violence.

He did not believe that anything was to be gained by lingering longer here. The Cassie Newcomb theory had received a pretty bad puncture, and would not hold water now. In fact, he was quite satisfied to drop it, once and for all. Before doing so, however, Blair concluded to find out a few facts that would wind the matter up, so far as he was concerned. He liked a complete job, so that when looking back to former cases there would be no tantalizing fag-ends left to annoy him.

"Am I right then in assuming that the veil which the young lady wears, and her evident reluctance about being recognized, had a bearing on her relations with her manager, Mr. Eckstein?" he asked.

"That's it, sir. You see, she made an injudicious contract, covering several years," answered Strang.

"But I was hardly to blame. The salary seemed munificent to me at the time, for uncle had not told me he intended making me his heiress. And besides——"

"Yes?" went on Strang, encouragingly, his eyes sparkling as though he could guess about what Cassie intended saying, from the fond look she gave him.

"I had not met you then, Willis."

"I'm sure you would never have tied your dear self up in that way if I had known it, darling. But you see, sir, Eckstein is obstinate. He has been offered a large sum by Mr. Paternoster, but he thought he saw a chance to double his anticipated profits by holding out."

"I see. And finally he went too far, eh?"

"He sure did, sir. We determined to break the contract. I've got a doctor who will swear that Cassie is in no condition to appear for some months; and indeed, that she should give up this glare of the stage, for her health is delicate."

Cassie could not restrain a little laugh at this, for she was evidently in the plot.

"Eckstein was to be paid a fair price, but we would not stand to be held up and robbed, would we, dear?" she said, and Willis agreed with her, after the fashion lovers usually have on tap.

"So we have taken passage on the steamer for Hamburg, that sails at three this afternoon. When he learns of the facts we shall be safe, far out on the ocean," the aviator went on, eagerly.

"Uncle supplied all the necessary funds, you know. Oh! he was very good to me. It will be the one drop of bitterness in my cup of happiness that I shall not see him again. Poor uncle!"

Blair thought that this was a good time for him to break away. Somehow it rather galled him to hear the dead man spoken of in such terms of affection. All that he had ever heard about Alexis Paternoster had inclined him to believe that the rich bachelor had always lived for his own pleasure, regardless of what that entailed on others.

It possibly pleased him to take this niece under his protecting care; somebody must inherit his wealth that had been a bane rather than a blessing while in his hands, and besides, Cassie was a pretty little girl, of whom he could be proud. Still, Alexis Paternoster might not be the only rich man whom the world misjudged, thinking that the one side of his nature seen of all men was his only asset.

Blair held out his hand to the showgirl.

"I must be going now. Will you allow me to wish you all happiness, Miss Cassie; and you, too, Mr. Strang?"

"Thank you, sir. We have our plans arranged, and much as we deplore this sad happening, it cannot interfere with our program. Cassie will come into her money; but I long ago declared that it must be settled on her, all beyond the amount necessary to put me into that combination of manufacturers. Good-by, and thank you again, Mr. Blair."

So the detective left them. Turning his head to look back after he had gone half a block, he was just in time to see the taxi spinning along the avenue. A little white kerchief waved to him, and then the vehicle turned a corner.

Blair smiled. He frequently came across little bits of romance in his grim business of hunting men; but he could not remember one that appealed more to his sympathies than the love affair between the young aviator and the pretty show-girl.

Mentally, then he crossed another promising clew off his diminishing list of available assets. Really, at this rate he must speedily reach bed rock. Come to think of it, there was only one more that held out any promise. Carmen!

Meanwhile, he had not forgotten about the gentleman connected with the apartment just below that of Paternoster, and which had been so completely robbed on the same night the tragedy had taken place. Hotchkiss was the name, and he had been a broker, accustomed to daring deals that put his possessions in jeopardy many times.

The superintendent had coaxed Blair to come to the Compton especially to investigate this burglary, and as yet he had not moved a finger along that line. Perhaps this had been because the murder had completely overshadowed all else. Then again, there may have been other reasons for his neglecting it.

When he walked away from the big hotel, somehow he was thinking of Hotchkiss, and apparently with something approaching amusement. Truth to tell, Blair had his own private opinion in connection with that Hotchkiss robbery. He had discovered certain marks that gave him positive suspicions.

When he asked Tarbox about the possibility of the gentleman having a crooked finger on his left hand, it was because he had found the plain imprint of such a disfiguring mark left by the bold burglar in numerous places on the furniture, when he was opening desk and drawers in search of supposed hidden valuables. Which fact gave Blair an idea that the man who was supposed to be up in Boston over night might have robbed his own apartments, for the purpose of cheating his creditors!

CHAPTER XII.
THE MAN WHO ROBBED HIMSELF.

Moreover, it happened that the detective knew something about this same Hotchkiss. When he asked Tarbox to describe the broker, and learned that he had a pair of blue eyes, a dark mustache, and always dressed like a nabob, Blair had remembered having dealt with

such a man a year or so before. At the time the broker had worn gloves, so that the fact of his crooked finger had not been made apparent—either that, or else the accident that gave him the disfiguring mark had happened afterward.

"I wonder if it's worth while looking him up," was the way he mused, as he walked down Broadway that morning.

It was the original matter upon which he had been employed; and the scent was apt to grow cold unless the trail were quickly taken. And so he concluded that while he was out he might just as well finish this part of his contract.

Besides, who could tell what mare's nest he might unearth by turning aside to look up Hotchkiss? The double robbery seemed to have a significance. On the face of it there was a chance, however small, that the same hand had accomplished both burglaries.

What if the party who had ransacked the Hotchkiss rooms, emboldened by his first success, had conceived the idea of extending the field of his operations by attacking the Paternoster apartment? Blair did not believe it had been done; but even such a possibility should not be overlooked.

"I guess I'll go after him. Three to one I find him in that same snug retreat where he went on that other occasion, when in dread of arrest on account of a shady operation on the street."

Having thus made up his mind the detective turned out of Broadway abruptly. The temptation had been too much for him. Since he was engaged in the task of solving the mysterious doings at the Compton, this was right in line with his other work.

A short time later, and he was in old Greenwich village, as the section around Bleecker street used to be called. Here old-time respectability vies with the flood of modern immigration.

Among the stolid brick houses with their white window shutters and doors of the same color were scattered colonies of French, Italian, Hebrew, and even Slav newcomers. Thompson street in spots has long ago been given over to the negro race. And yet in scores of places it is possible to find good families marooned here amid the squalor of hybrid races, like oases in the desert.

Before such a house the detective stopped. It was a quiet building, and had a silver name plate on the massive white door: "Thompson!"

"Yes, this is the same house where I found him on that other occasion, and occupied by the identical family who take boarders. I wonder if he is in?" and the detective rang the bell, ignoring the big brass knocker that was a relic of past glories more than an article of everyday use.

A woman answered the summons. She was a motherly-looking person, with white hair, and he recognized her as the lady of the house.

"Pardon me, but is this Mrs. Thompson?" he said.

On his former visit here he had appeared in the guise of a French gentleman, so he had no fear that she would recognize him now. And apparently she did not.

"Yes, sir, that is my name," she replied.

"Some time ago I was referred to you in case I had any intention of changing my quarters. Where I am it has become too noisy, and this seems quiet and restful enough."

"It has that reputation, sir. Did you mention the name of the party who recommended our house?"

"I don't think I did. It was a Mr. Hotchkiss, ma'am."

He saw something flash across her face just then, so minute that any other person than a shrewd detective might never have noticed it. But Blair was always looking for just such telltale signs, and could read one's mind through similar small things.

"He's here, all right," was what he whispered to himself, as soon as he had noticed this.

"Oh! yes, Mr. Hotchkiss used to be a great friend of ours. Might I ask your name, sir?"

"It is Arthur Benchley. I hope that you will be able to accommodate me, ma'am."

She looked irresolutely at him.

"Would you mind stepping in, and waiting a few minutes in the parlor, Mr. Benchley?"

"Not at all; it would be a pleasure, I assure you."

"You see, my daughter knows more about the rooms than I do, and I would have to consult with her before I could give you an answer. We have one vacant, but she may have promised that; for somehow our house seems to be in great demand. We are nearly always full."

"I don't doubt it, ma'am. I feel sure that I should be very well satisfied here, myself, and I hope the answer may be favorable. Is your daughter sick ma'am?"

"Oh! no, sir, but engaged just at this moment in attending to household duties. Mr. Arthur Benchley, you said?"

"Yes, ma'am."

With another uneasy look she left the room.

Of course, Blair knew very well that the old lady had not gone to consult with her daughter. Her repeating the name he had given told him what her intentions must have been.

"She's going to ask Hotchkiss if he knows any one by that name," he chuckled.

He could hear her ascending the stairs. By the time she had reached the top the detective was at the bottom, ready to follow after her. He believed in striking while the iron was hot.

And while those ancient though sturdy stairs may have creaked a little under the weight of the buxom old lady, they gave forth not the slightest sound as Gideon Blair slipped upward. He knew just how to favor the side next the wall, so as to keep from giving notice of his movements.

Once above, and he had little difficulty in slipping across the hall, dodging into a passage that branched off at one side, and discovering the old lady at a door, through which she had thrust her white head. Then a voice reached Blair.

"What's that, mother? A man by the name of Arthur Benchley, who says he knows me, and that I recommended him to come here? It's false! I don't know such a man! Turn him down! Tell him you're full up! Get him away on any terms! He's crooked; he means to make me trouble, I tell you!"

That was Hotchkiss, all right! He had hidden here in his old retreat, instead of going up to Boston, as he had so loudly announced his intention of doing. It had all been a "stall," that pretended burglary of his apartments, after he had taken the pains to tell several people what valuables he was leaving his room.

In some wonderful manner Hotchkiss had managed to visit his own apartment during the night, unbeknown to any one connected with the Compton. He himself had taken certain things away, and when the fact of the burglary came out he could easily claim that he had lost certain papers of great value which he

"Murder!"

was holding in trust. There was a big game back of it all, and Hotchkiss had thus far played it to perfection.

Just as he came to the end of his little declaration concerning the dark purposes of the pretended would-be boarder, Blair gave a little cough. The old lady uttered a gasp. From beyond the half-open door came a hearty curse, and Hotchkiss attempted to close the gap; but he could not do so with the woman half in and half out. Besides, Blair had thrust a hand forward, and held the door against being shut.

"Good morning, Hotchkiss!"

With this pleasant salutation the detective pushed into the room. He found himself facing an angry man, whose blue eyes fairly sparkled with the sudden fury that possessed his soul. For in that one moment the tricky broker saw all his fine schemes for "doing" his creditors going up in smoke.

And if the old lady failed to recognize Blair the broker certainly did not, for he had seen him shorn of his former disguise as a French gentleman.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he growled, trying to get his rattled wits together so as to make one last despairing stand.

"At your service, Hotchkiss. You see I feared you might decline to meet me if I gave my own name, and so I took another. We detectives reserve that right, you know."

"What do you want?"

"Why, they told me that you were up in Boston, but somehow I had a hunch you might be found her in your old quarters. Just why you sail under the name of Hotchkiss when your mother is a Mrs. Thompson does not concern me, you understand."

"She married again," muttered the other, eyeing Blair after the manner of one who anticipated a sudden blow, and hardly knew just how to prepare to receive it.

"Tarbox wanted to communicate with you, but you had not left any address. He thought you ought to know with as little delay as possible that your rooms had been entered and ransacked last night."

"Do you mean a robbery has been committed, and that I have suffered a great and irreparable loss?"

Blair smiled blandly.

"Well, the job was evidently done in a masterly fashion, Hotchkiss. They undoubtedly got away with those valuable papers you were keeping for a friend, as well as anything of your own that happened to be in your safe. It was a clean sweep."

"The devil you say!"

Hotchkiss tried hard to appear staggered, and perhaps he played the part well enough to have deceived some people.

But not this keen-eyed sleuth.

"However, I hope you will not find yourself utterly ruined by the burglary. I see that you have a suitcase here," and with one quick movement he turned it upside down, whereupon all manner of things fell upon the floor, from packages of papers to rolls of money and jewelry boxes that might contain gems worth considerable, since Hotchkiss sported many diamonds.

The man turned white, then fiery red. He knew that his bluff had been called. Once before this Blair had given him a rare fright, and it looked as though history might repeat itself.

"Lucky man, to have saved so much from the wreck!" laughed the detective, as he caught the other's eye.

Hotchkiss seemed to be unable to decide whether to put up a further bluff or own to the humiliating truth.

"How did you do it?" asked Blair, as he closed the door, and shut the staring old lady out.

"I suppose it's useless in my trying to hoodwink you, Blair. What gets me is your being on the case so quick," he faintly observed, gritting his teeth as he spoke.

"Oh! I happened to be a friend of Tarbox, and as soon as he discovered that your apartment had been entered he called me over. It was fairly well done, Hotchkiss; but you managed to leave incriminating marks behind that gave you away. A man who is so unfortunate as to have a crooked finger should be more careful how he handles furniture. If you had written your name there it would hardly be more convincing."

Hotchkiss stared down at his hand, and then looked at the detective in amazement.

"You're a wonder, Blair. What chance has a fellow when he's up against a wizard like you?" he muttered.

"All the chance any honest man has. I deal only with rogues, you see. Now, what are you going to do about this thing?"

"Threw up the sponge, say I visited my rooms in the night, put these things back, deny there ever was a burglary, and stand the racket with my creditors. Will that satisfy you, Blair?"

"It will so far as the pretended burglary in your rooms is concerned."

"But—is there anything else against me?"

"There might be. At least, it has a suspicious look that you should be looting your own apartment on the same night some rascal entered the rooms above, committed a robbery, and murdered Mr. Paternoster!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REAL ISSUE.

Seldom had Blair ever set eyes on a more horrified countenance than that of the slippery broker when he heard about Paternoster's passing. No doubt it all flashed over him in a trice, and he realized what a terrible mess he had brought down about his ears by his latest little scheme for defrauding his just creditors.

Murder! It sent a cold chill all over him, just to whisper the ugly word to himself. And would not every one believe that the man who could lay out such a bold scheme for robbing himself, would be equal to taking a look-in on his neighbor while about it?

"You don't believe that I could have had a hand in any such fearful thing, Blair? I know you don't, man! Why, I was shivering like an aspen leaf while doing my own job, where, if discovered, I could claim that I had forgotten some important paper and come back for it. I'm too much of a coward to ever dare enter another man's apartment, even if the door stood invitingly open.'"

And the detective, observing him, really believed the fellow spoke the truth. After all, Hotchkiss was built along despicable lines and aroused only disdain in the mind of a sleuth, accustomed to hunting big game. He could deal in trickery, and doubtless believed himself very smart; but when it came to a show-down Hotchkiss would crawl and whine.

No, it was next to incredible that his had been the sinewy fingers which had shut off the breath of life in Paternoster. And yet Hotchkiss had rendered himself subject to suspicion, so that he should be given a lesson which he would not soon forget.

"Are you dead positive that you did not have some way of climbing from your window up to that of the Paternoster apartment, and entering, bent on making a haul worth while?" he said, sternly.

The man really believed he meant it, for his knees fairly knocked together with fright.

"Good Heavens! Blair, all the money in the world couldn't tempt me to get out of my window and hang there, let alone climbing up in any desperate way. I tell you I'm not built for adventure. I used to think I was as brave as the next man, but now I know I'm a miserable coward."

"I believe you, Hotchkiss. To be brutally frank with you, I'm of the opinion that you're more or less of a despicable scamp, and that sooner or later you are going to get what's coming to you. While I hardly believe myself that you would have the nerve to make that climb, I do not drop you out of the running yet. So long as I am unable to put my hand on the party who did kill Paternoster, you will be under my eye. On your life, don't make the slightest attempt to leave New York, or it will look as though you contemplated flight. And you know what that would imply!"

"I promise you Mr. Blair, that I won't go out of the city without letting you know. Of course, I must get around to my rooms now, and make it appear that I left them in that state when I went away."

"You admit that you've been next door to a fool, do you not, Hotchkiss?"

"A jackass you mean. Perhaps it serves me right. A man is crazy to think he can deceive such a wonder as you, Blair. I never would have tackled the job if I suspected Tarbox knew you. Now, I'll go back, and take my medicine."

"All right, Hotchkiss. I've no doubt you may have played some cunning games in the past, but from now on you'd better mend your ways, for I'm going to keep an eye on you. There's a cell yawning for you, my friend. Go slow, or it will not yawn in vain."

Hotchkiss shivered at the picture of a man in stripes which was conjured up by these words of the detective.

"I will, I promise you, sir. I'm going to turn over a new leaf, I swear it," he protested.

But Blair was not a credulous man. He knew the stripe of rascal too well, and that it was simply a case of:

"When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be;
When the devil was well, the devil a saint was he."

Hotchkiss only meant that in the future he would take pains so to conduct his sleek business that even so clever a sleuth as Gideon Blair might not find a loophole by means of which he could be convicted of fraud. And so Blair continued to believe that sooner or later he would have the task of introducing this tricky sharper to that waiting cell in Sing Sing.

He looked at his watch. Really this little side issue had not occupied any great amount of time, and it had cleared the air considerably, which was something of a pleasure.

It pleased the detective to find that his first suspicion in connection with the Hotchkiss burglary had proved to be the real thing. That crooked finger clew had been the means of the tricky broker's undoing. Without that Blair

(Continued on page thirteen.)

THE WINNING OF MARY

Or, HEARTS OF GOLD By FERGUS JEROME

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Begun in No. 30, July 27. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XI.

A MIRACLE IN OUR FAVOR.

THEY were evidently overhauling us very fast, and if things kept up after this fashion the meeting must occur before we could hope for darkness to enshroud us in its friendly mantle, although it was coming on faster than usual on account of the clouded sky overhead that promised a bit of a blow. Thus we were threatened with two perils at the same time, for if we escaped the claws of the pirates it might be to wrestle with a tempest, and be engulfed in the maw of the agitated sea; but of the two evils the leading one concerned our being overhauled by those swooping craft coming up so rapidly from the rear.

It required some nerve to make even a show of fighting against such odds, for the chances of escaping seemed about one in a dozen—hardly as good as that, was my secret thought as I handled a rifle, and mentally calculated on just how far off I could drop the man at the tiller of the leading boat.

When the moment came to fire I found a little difficulty in the fact that the light had suddenly gone poor, so that objects were not seen as distinctly as one would like when so much depended on the success of his first shot. Nevertheless, when the gun spoke I saw the fellow, who was craning his neck to watch my actions, suddenly double up and fall in a heap, from which it was easy to judge that my old skill as a marksman still held good.

The boat yawed a trifle until another fellow had jumped to the tiller to steady her, when I began to rattle the lead about his ears in a lively manner, until at the third shot he, too, made a convulsive leap, and again the boat was left without a steersman. Had it been only one vessel I had to contend with I might have overawed those yellow cowards aboard, for they already began to understand that it was as good as inviting death to lay a hand on the swinging tiller; but there were two more coming on just behind, and from these shots now began to sound, with the bullets humming and whining past my ears. I immediately made Mary lie down in the bottom of the boat, though, as on that former occasion she seemed loath to obey while I continued to stand there in full view, smashing the shots out as fast as I could work the well-oiled mechanism of the faithful little repeater.

As the hammer fell without any report, and I realized that the magazine was empty, I dropped that gun and reached for a second, when to my surprise and delight I heard several shots close at hand, and discovered the little woman, God bless her, crouching there in the stern and shooting as fast as she could manage the pump gun. Perhaps her shots may not have done much execution, but sometimes noise helps to cow the hearts of savage men as well as of animals, and these desperadoes would see from this that there were at least two of us.

The first boat had fallen off, since no man dared venture near the spot where two had already met their fate; so that the other craft passed her on their way toward us, one sheering off to the starboard and the other to port, evidently with the intention of overwhelming us on either side with their attentions.

I think I received my first wound about this time, for I can faintly remember feeling something like a red-hot needle touching my left arm; but I paid not the slighest attention to it, since I could use that member apparently as well as ever, and that was the main thing.

Never did mortal man wage a more forlorn battle than I seemed to be doing there on that darkened water, and with three piratical craft, loaded down with fierce freebooters, to concentrate their fire upon me; I should doubtless have been cut down long ere this with half an hundred bullets had it not been for the orders given to those savage marksmen to beware of hitting the white woman—I have always believed this must have been the fact to which I owed my life; for they were close enough now to enable even a wretched shot to do fell execution.

I never missed a chance to pot some unlucky wretch who persisted in trying to hold on to one of the tillers; and I have never been able to give even a guess as to how many of the rascals I caused to drop, or writhe away from the fatal spot. I judge from the fact that four rifles, beside the one handled by Mary, were found to be empty afterward, that I must have done a wholesale business at that stand, with a corresponding degree of mortality among the saffron-hued pilots aboard the three hostile craft.

They were constantly drawing nearer, despite my frantic efforts to decimate the numbers of the crews; and yet, strange to say, they seemed to be getting less distinct to my eyes, which fact gave me a thrill of alarm, for I feared that some of my various wounds might have been more serious than I had thought possible, and in consequence I was about to swoon from weakness and loss of blood. I think now that it must have been the gloom that was so rapidly settling down over the face of the waters that caused this phenomenon, rather than weakness on my part, though it was unquestioned that I had about reached the end of my rope, and was nearly all in.

The crash of many guns exploding so close by was like the roar of battle, and just then full fifty tongues arose in one grand shout, whether of anticipated victory or sudden alarm it was impossible for me to tell, for things had begun to swim before my eyes, and everything was growing blank. I remember of trying to reach out after another rifle, under the impression that it was my bounden duty to fight to the very last gasp—of hearing a strange shuddering sound as of the swoop of the wind in the van of a squall—of feeling the little boat tilt far over as though about to turn turtle, while the sail was ripped from the mast as though made of paper—all this, and then a blank.

Something cold like water about my limbs aroused me again, and I lay there for a full minute trying to picture what had happened, and where I might be, for all was intense darkness around me, with the sea lifting the staunch little native craft in its arms and rushing it over lofty billows and down into deep valleys. Then something of the truth flashed athwart my mind, and I was seized with a feeling of black horror at the thought that, after all my game struggles, she had doubtless been swept overboard, and was lost in that surging sea.

The thought was so maddening that I tried to struggle up, possibly with the idea of following her to death; when a flash of lurid lightning lighted up the terrible scene for a moment. What I saw thrilled me to the core, and a great feeling of thanksgiving welled up in my heart; for although the illumination had been but momentary it had shown me Mary Smith kneeling close by, bailing the water from the boat with frantic zeal.

Just then, as though at the last her spirit gave way, she dropped the wooden basin with which she had been doing such yeoman service, and threw herself upon me, doubtless under the impression that I was either dead or else still senseless; for even though the wild wind screeched and the waves lashed, I could swear I heard her cry aloud:

"Oh, we must die at last! But thank Heaven it will be together, dearest!" and then she kissed me. Again and again she kissed my face in a passionate way, as if despair had settled upon her brave heart.

Such an ecstasy would have almost brought me back to life if my spirit were leaving its earthly tenement. I know that I immediately struggled to get up, at which she gave a great cry of sudden ecstasy, and seizing hold of my groping hand begged me to assure her that I was not going to leave her, which I did as soon as I could control my tongue, and in a manner not to be mistaken, though I would much rather have taken her into my arms and pressed her to my hungry heart, feeling that though we went down into the depths the next minute, for that brief space of time, at least, she was mine.

But new hope had sprung up in my breast. We could not have been saved as by a miracle thus far to have the blessed cup dashed from our lips at this late hour; and since a merciful Providence had watched over us to this point, perhaps I might be able to add to our chances by a further display of energy. Of course, I was in a disreputable condition for work, but then the consciousness that Mary loved me gave me a fictitious strength which I should never have found otherwise; and thus buttressed, and with her hand to assist, I managed to find the wooden basin and bail out some of the water that was flooding us.

The little squall had already exhausted its energies, and the wind was going down, so that the seas had lost much of their sting, and the waves no longer broke into foam along their crests. It was enough to give a man hope, the wonderful way in which we two had been preserved through all of these desperate adventures; and I could once more catch a blessed glimpse of a glorious future beckoning to me, with Mary at my side and the world well-nigh forgotten.

After we had succeeded in relieving the boat of the water, I tried to rig up something in the shape of a sea anchor, which, dragging at our stern, would keep us steady; and, if you please, that same old spar came in handy for this very purpose, showing how it was certainly a friend in time of need, and bound to be connected with all our fortunes.

When this had been done and the danger seemed over, I succumbed, and had to lie down in the boat on the wet blankets while she did her very best to tie up the nasty wound in my left arm, from which I had been losing so much blood as to weaken me. If she had been a born nurse indeed, instead of one by adoption, Mary could not have done better under the most distressing conditions which surrounded us, and only the lightning flashes to give her a chance to see what she was accomplishing. After she had completed the job I declared that I felt much better, which was the truth too; and so sitting there, side by side, we tried to discover just how it had come that we had escaped from the cruel jaws of the sea tigers at the moment I lost consciousness, and our little boat seemed at their mercy.

It would seem that the shout I had heard must have signified a sudden consciousness of the impending squall, and that for the moment we were utterly forgotten in the task of trying to keep their boats from capsizing. After the first violence of the gale had passed the merciful darkness effectually screened us from observation, and then the rising billows had completed the job, so that there was not the slighest danger of their finding us again while the night lasted.

In the morning, of course, the danger would begin again; but since we had proved to be such decided favorites of fortune I was unable now to bring myself to believe that any further peril could waylay us; it seemed as though, with those burning kisses by which Mary had betrayed her love, the barriers must be lowered, and a smiling future await us.

So we talked on hopefully of the vessel which we felt sure we would see when the light of day again broke over the heaving sea; but not a word did I say to tell her that I knew how, in that last extremity, when she had believed me dead, and herself fated to go down with me into the depths, she had betrayed her jealously guarded secret. That would have to wait for a more favorable setting, when both of us might present a far different appearance than now, soaked as we were with water, and most forlorn, so far as looks went, but with the most thankful hearts in all the Far East throbbing in our bosoms.

I had seen many things in my day of travel, and even experienced more or less strange adventures, from which a kindly fortune had drawn me unscathed; but these all sank into utter insignificance when compared with the events of the last four weeks, or since Mary Smith had come into my life. Had I not felt, when first my eyes fell upon her and the electric sparkle of her blue eyes dazzled my senses, that Fate intended our lives should flow along the same lines, and that in some way, the nature of which I might not fathom, this thing would be brought about? And looking back, I was satisfied with the working out of our manifest destiny.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Of course, everything was wet aboard our little boat; but we found so much to be grateful for that this seemed a matter of exceeding small importance; I managed to wring out the blankets with the aid of Mary, and while they were not dry they served far better than nothing at all.

Several times she dropped asleep during the long vigils of the night, once with her head falling on my shoulder; nor could I resist the temptation to let my arm creep around her dear form; and there I would have sat, quite contented, holding her to me until hours later the dawn appeared, only that of her own accord she aroused long before I was ready to let her go, and in some confusion moved away.

But I saw no reason for borrowing trouble now, since I was satisfied in my own mind that I had won her, despite the difference in our stations in life. She was fitted to be the consort of a king, and the only claim I could make was that I had done all that a common ordinary man might do in her service—and that I loved her better than my very life.

Of course, we watched the dawn creeping over the sea with more or less anxiety and misgivings, as well as furtive hopes; bit by bit the gloom of night was pushed further and further away, until finally with the sun ready to peep into view we could see the whole horizon in every direction. It was quite deserted.

While we might feel something of disappointment in this respect, there was also reason for great rejoicing, in that our enemies must have given up the chase as hopeless, if indeed they were lucky enough to have survived the squall, and had returned to their eyrie along the coast, from which they kept a lookout for quarry in the shape of disabled vessels, or those becalmed near the shore.

Again my little nurse looked after my wounded arm, and with such gentle care that as she finished I had the greatest difficulty in the world to keep from taking her in my embrace and telling her what she surely must have read in my eager, telltale eyes, so close to her own, for she blushed as she went forward, as she declared, to get some breakfast ready.

Another day of sailing without a sail, drifting with the slightest caprice of the wind, and constantly watching for a friendly smoke.

I had made up my mind to confess to something, after she had heard my plea; and when the day was nearly over, and we sat there in silence, I ventured to take up her hand in mine, while she turned her head away, probably so that I might not see the warm blushes that chased each other over her face and neck; for certainly some intuition must have warned her that I could no longer sit there and keep my tongue from confessing what my looks and eyes had long ago proclaimed—that I loved her, and could only be happy with some assurance that she returned my devotion.

Perhaps I made something of a mess of it, for what I had intended to say slipped from my mind at the critical moment; but then I must have managed to tell enough to satisfy her; for finally, after more or less coy confusion, she looked up at me and gave me the answer I yearned to hear. Nor did she resist me when I gently took her in my arms and deliberately kissed those ripe red lips so like a Cupid's bow; yes, pressed them again and again, while black eyes looked into blue, and read only the truest devotion there.

After a while we sat holding hands and speaking of many things in the past that were apt to remain long in our minds, since they were inseparably connected with our united fortunes, when I broached another subject that it was only fair should be explained; and I could see from the roguish gleam in her eyes as she listened that Mary must have suspected something of the truth for some little time back, for certainly she did not appear greatly surprised.

"You have only known me as John Henry," I said, humbly enough; "but that is not all my name, for you must add to it that of Adrian. I am a New Yorker, a devoted yachtsman who has visited all the strange corners of the world on board my boat, and met with more or less strange adventures. Some time ago in my club I chanced to make an idle assertion which was instantly snapped up by a wealthy friend, who declared that he stood ready to wager me twenty thousand dollars that I could not start out without one cent in my pockets, and actually work my way around the entire world, doing manual work, and arriving back in New York on a certain date, the twenty-first of September.

"Feeling in need of something out of the common to stir my stagnant blood, I took up the wager, and soon afterward started out, going to San Francisco as a brakeman on the railroad. Then, when

HOW MANY OF US

Fail to Select Food Nature Demands to Ward Off Ailments?

A Ky. lady, speaking about food, says: "I was accustomed to eating all kinds of ordinary food until, for some reason, indigestion and nervous prostration set in.

"After I had run down seriously my attention was called to the necessity of some change in my diet, and I discontinued my ordinary breakfast and began using Grape-Nuts with a good quantity of rich cream.

"In a few days my condition changed in a remarkable way, and I began to have a strength that I had never been possessed of before, a vigor of body and a poise of mind that amazed me. It was entirely new in my experience.

"My former attacks of indigestion had been accompanied by heat flashes, and many times my condition was distressing with blind spells of dizziness, rush of blood to the head and neuralgic pains in the chest.

"Since using Grape-Nuts alone for breakfast I have been free from those troubles, except at times when I have indulged in rich, greasy foods in quantity, then I would be warned by a pain under the left shoulder blade, and unless I heeded the warning the old trouble would come back, but when I finally got to know where these troubles originated I returned to my Grape-Nuts and cream and the pain and disturbance left very quickly.

"I am now in prime health as a result of my use of Grape-Nuts." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason," and it is explained in the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

I could find the chance, I took passage on a steamer bound for Yokohama, and by slow degrees I managed to get along until you saw me first on board the poor old Triton, not even Captain Crowninshield knowing my secret; for you see it was a part of the contract that not a living soul should be told the truth during the entire trip, so that I might be free from advantages such as would not come to a genuine laborer or seaman. I was just figuring up, and I find that because of my month on our blessed island I have lost my wager, so that, acknowledging defeat, I am privileged to tell my story, to you first of all."

"Twenty thousand dollars! Oh! and you have lost all of that! What a pity," she said, trying to look sorry; but I laughed as might a man to whom that amount was as the merest trifle, while I exclaimed:

"If it were a million, I would still think myself the luckiest fellow in all t'e world, for what lost me my wager gave me something I value a thousand times more—yourself, my darling Mary! So you see it was, after all, but the working out of destiny; for I had gone all these years amid scenes of splendor in every land, and met ladies by the thousand without ever falling in love, until that moment when I first saw you in your demure maid's costume aboard the steamer."

Then she had a turn at heaving a great sigh, and looking up at me from the corners of her roguish eyes, as she said slowly:

"Since confessions seem to be in vogue, perhaps I ought to also tell you something that has been weighing heavily on my mind and conscience for some little time. My name to begin with is not Mary Smith, though the first part of it belongs to me with half a dozen others; but among those who have known me it has been Lady Dorothy. I am an English girl, second daughter of the late Lord Cropsey. I have been in the care of my uncle, Sir Rudolph Plimsoe, whose one ambition it seemed to be to marry me to his dissolute son, who had conceived a mad fancy for me, and who had assured his father that he would reform and enter Parliament if I would only promise to take him; but he always filled me with detestation, and I steadily declined. It was getting near the time when I would be of age and able to do as I chose; upon which my guardian and his son whisked me off to the East, on pretense of traveling in those latitudes, but in reality determined that when we came back to England I should surely be the wife of Robert. Learning this one day while in Calcutta, I fled to a friend who was just about leaving for home, and she disguised me as her nurse and companion, even coloring my hair, as you know. That is all, John Henry. Do you forgive me, and can you love Lady Dorothy Just as well as you vowed you did plain Mary Smith, the nurse?"

We looked at each other and then laughed until we felt weak from the effect of our hilarity. The idea of each of us figuring under an assumed identity was so supremely ridiculous; and while we did not say so then, we surely must have thought of certain little matters which had come up before our several minds for settlement at various times in the past—such as a highborn lady falling in love with a common sailorman; or a gentleman whose name was known in the first circles of Gotham choosing to throw himself away on a mere trained nurse. But after all, you see our hearts spoke true every time, and it had all come out as splendidly as the veriest fairy tale—I was the prince in disguise, and she the princess of the royal blood whom I had the honor to save from the dragon, and whose hand therefore I claimed in reward.

We were not unlike two happy children from that hour on; the specter of peril could not daunt us, and we looked the future unblinkingly in the face, secure in the mutual love that bound our hearts as one.

Another hour and smoke appeared back of us, with the funnel of a steamer heaving in sight. It was not far from evening, and the prospect of another night afloat was not very alluring, so we prepared to do our very best to attract attention before the shades of darkness hid us from view.

Success followed our efforts, for we fired guns together, waved a Union Jack, and in various other ways created as much racket as possible. The steamer changed her course, and then we knew we had been seen; so in our transports we did not say so then, we surely must have thought of certain little matters which had come up before our several minds for settlement at various times in the past—such as a highborn lady falling in love with a common sailorman; or a gentleman whose name was known in the first circles of Gotham choosing to throw himself away on a mere trained nurse. But after all, you see our hearts spoke true every time, and it had all come out as splendidly as the veriest fairy tale—I was the prince in disguise, and she the princess of the royal blood whom I had the honor to save from the dragon, and whose hand therefore I claimed in reward.

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Apparently he realized that he had lost the game, for Uncle Rudolph tried to make himself agreeable; but after the way he had persecuted my Mary, in the endeavor to influence her to marry his miserable son, I felt that I would never care to know him, and I cut him dead, as well as Robert, a chip of the old block.

You can guess the rest, I am sure, so that it is only necessary for me to add that we are as happy as the day is long, and that after all Captain Crowninshield escaped with his life, being washed off on a piece of wreck, and rescued days later by some craft at sea; also that those in the first boat, including Mary's good friend, Mrs. Partington, were picked up, so that two years later my dear little wife had the delightful pleasure of relating to that sympathetic soul the wonderful story of our adventures, and how a strange fortune had so intertwined our affairs that there could be but one inevitable consequence, which of course was matrimony.

What became of Burgoyne we never knew, but it may be he is still playing his congenial part among those sea tigers as a despoiler and rascal; and I might as well confess just here that our affection for that wonderful spar that had had such a prominent part in our reaching Paradise still holds good, and there is a nook in my house where it reposes and will ever stay, a memento of these stirring times when stout hearts of gold were needed to carry us along the floodtide into a happy harbor.

The End.

That wonderful old spar!

How Jennie Met Jennie.

This is the story of the mystery of a New York apartment house, or the unexpected meeting of Jennie Smith and Jennie Brown. Jennie Smith, who tells the story, says, "If you saw it in the paper you would never believe it," but here it is in the paper and it is absolutely true. This is the way it all happened, as Jennie Smith tells it.

Jennie Smith and Jennie Brown went to the same school, where they became warm friends. They lived in nearby cities. Jennie Brown was the first of the two girls to be married. Jennie Smith was one of her bridesmaids, and then she went immediately abroad to remain an indefinite period. During the latter part of that period correspondence languished, as correspondences have a way of doing. Meanwhile Jennie Smith was married, and after a time came to live in New York.

"Do you know," wrote an up-State friend to her recently, "I hear that Jennie Brown has returned from abroad and is living in New York. You may run across her."

Thus prepared, Jennie Smith was not so much surprised the other day, entering the elevator of the handsome apartment house in which she lived, to meet her old friend, Jennie Brown. The two women greeted each other warmly.

"You were coming to see me?" cried Jennie Smith, with delight.

"You mean you were coming to see me!" said Jennie Brown, equally pleased, and the elevator, going on its upward course, stopped at the third floor and she turned toward the door.

"Oh, not on this floor," cried Jennie Smith. "I'm two floors above."

"But I live here," said Jennie Brown, in amazement.

Then the unbelievable part of the story came out. Jennie Brown had lived in the apartment house for six years and her friend, moving in, had lived there, two floors above her, for three of that six, and the two had never met.

When there was a general reunion it was found out that the two husbands knew each other well, as apartment house acquaintances go, met almost daily in the elevator and exchanged confidences in regard to politics or the weather, according as the one or the other was the most important topic of the hour. Each of the women had seen the other woman's husband often enough to recognize him as a resident of the house, but they had never chanced to meet each other.

Dangerous Name.

The residents of a certain suburb of Chicago were for a time governed by a passion for giving sweet, poetical names to their "estates." There was one such man who built a handsome villa, calling it "The Nutshell." Thus was the home introduced to his friends, and it became widely known. To the surprise of all, therefore, the name was one day suddenly changed to "Sylvan Nook," and a flood of inquiries soon began to pour in.

"Why have you given your home a new name?" a friend asked. "What was the matter with 'The Nutshell'?"

"I sickened of being joshed about it," said the owner, with a sigh. "There isn't a boy within two miles hereabouts who hasn't stopped and rung the doorbell to ask if the colonel was in."

An Exception.

"Always mind your own business," said the Sage. "It doesn't pay to get mixed up in other people's quarrels."

"Oh, I don't know," replied the Young Man. "I'm a lawyer."

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A Cautious Estimate.

Sandy was an elder in the church, and a truly pious man. He had an eye for beauty and a love for it, but he married Tina because he knew she would make him an excellent wife.

"I suppose Tina is a handsome lass?" said Sandy's cousin, who met him in Glasgow not long after the marriage, and had never seen the bride. "I ken ye've gude taste, Sandy?"

"Aweel," said the bridegroom, cautiously, "she's the Lord's handiwork, Tammas. I'm no' prepared to say she is His masterpiece."

Thought It Was Stone.

"Professor Blinker is getting more absent-minded every day."

"What's his latest break?"

"Why, his oldest daughter is just out of cooking school, you know, and he's been showing his class a cruller she made. He told them it was proof of the fact that the men of the stone age played the game of ring-toss."

Had Trod the Path Before.

Miller—Just as Millet and the widow started up the aisle to the altar every light in the church went out.

Mumford—What did the couple do then?

Miller—Kept on going. The widow knew the way.—Judge.

A Consideration.

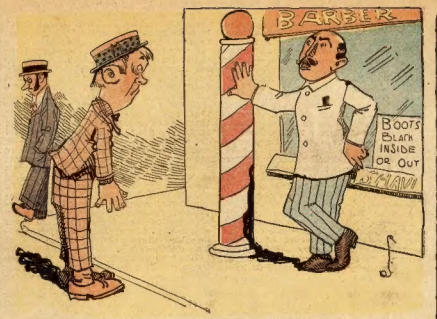
"Why don't you abdicate?"

"How can I?" replied the monarch of a small but turbulent country. "If I don't stay on the job there's nobody to O. K. my expense account."

Budding Genius.

Knicker—You think Johnny will grow up to be President?

Proudpop—Yes; that boy can eat anything.



Barber—Sam, I'll give you a dollar if you'll paint this pole.
Sam Slowboy—I would, but I haven't got any striped paint.

Turning Talents to Profit.

"Your facial expression is wonderful," said the admiring friend.

"Is that so?" replied Mr. Stormington Barnes.

"Yes. I never saw such mobile expression, such wonderful facility for conveying whatever thought you may choose to express."

"Well, if I've got a face like that I think I'll quit acting and go to playing poker."

Sometimes Counted Out.

A Cincinnati man who visited New York not long ago was presented to "Big" Tim Sullivan of Tammany fame. It happened that in the course of the conversation that ensued between the Westerner and Big Tim the former quoted the old saying, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again."

Big Tim smiled in a superior way. "I suppose that's right, my friend," he said, "but sometimes not before the referee has counted ten."

Helping Along.

Church—It is said a tea made of the leaves of the 'laughing plant' of Arabia puts the partaker into a hilarious humor for an hour or so.

Gotham—I only wish we could get some for our club dinner tomorrow night.

"Why?"

"You're going to make one of your funny speeches, aren't you?"

Hard to Suit.

"The girls declared they would rather dance than eat."

"Well?"

"Yet now they're kicking because we added two waltz numbers to the programme and cut down the supper menu a little bit."

A Bad Outlook.

"No, I can't get up enough courage to ask old Patterson for his daughter."

"And why not?"

"Because I'm a builder of absolutely fireproof buildings and he is a fire insurance agent."

An Advertisement.

Wanted, at once—Two fluent and well-learned persons, male or female, to answer the questions of a little girl of three and a boy of four, each to take four hours per day and rest the parents of said children.

Fashionable.

"Theirs was a fashionable divorce, I understand."

"Very. After the Judge gave her her decree she gave her former husband splendid references."

Doctor—This medicine is expensive, but if you take it according to directions you'll be well in a week.

Patient—See here, doctor, I have to pay for this medicine myself, but my pay goes on while I am sick! I'd rather you'd give me a cheap medicine, that'll get me well in about a month!

Snoozy Simpson—Well, I got ahead of that judge, all right, all right.
Battered Bascom—How was dat?
Snoozy Simpson—He gave me five minutes to git out of town and I made it in two.

Only One He Knew.

"Have you ever had a chance to observe a woman who is married to a genius?"

"Only one: if you'll come home to dinner with me I'll introduce you."

Her Reformation.

"Out in Reno I met a lady who told me she used to marry men she wouldn't invite to a musicale now."

Not Idle Amusement.

"I hope you are not playing politics," said the reformer.

"There's no such thing as playing politics," replied Senator Sorghum. "Politics these days is work."

More Important.

"Your husband has no stamina, has he, Mrs. O'Brien?"

"No, sir, but he's got a life insurance."

Jimmy—Eddie says he's got the finest ma in the de world.
Joey—How is she?
Jimmy—He says she forces him to go swimmin'!

Her Own Opinion.

McGorry—I'll buy ye no new hat d'yes moind thot? Ye are vain enough ahriddy.

Mrs. McGorry—Me vain? Ol'm not! Shure, Oi don't t'ink meself half as good-looking as Oi am.

Unusual.

"Will you be my wife?"

The girl parried this question with another.

"Is this proposal the result of a bet or a joke or a dare?" she inquired.

"By no means. I ask you to marry me because I love you."

"It is unusual; but, after all, the unusual is the proper caper nowadays. Iaccept you, Frederick."

A Boy's "Notice."

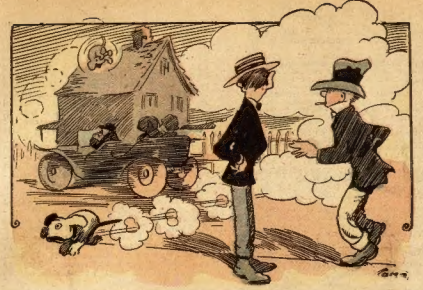
Notice—Whoever killed my little dog Rex please let me know, so I can come and get him with my little wagon and bury him. Robert Morrison.

Howell—How are you feeling?
Powell—First class, considering that I have just had a vacation.

A Brief Respite.

"I don't hear so many statesmen saying the trusts must go.'"

"No," replied Mr. Dustin Stax; "for the moment most of them are too busy trying to get rid of one another."



"Something ought to be done to prevent this violation of the speed laws by automobiles; it's dangerous to life the way they rush through the streets."

"Have you ever been injured by one of them?"

"Well, yes, in a way; you see, I am the official dog catcher and I get 50 cents for every stray dog I capture and now these blamed machines hurt my business by killing them off."

His Excuse.

She—You didn't seem to like the new symphony at the concert last night?

He—No. The fact is, I ignored it.

She—Ignored it?

He—Yes. Mrs. Knoshtail was with us, you know, and she said she heard it in Munich last year, and I couldn't show an interest in anything as second hand as that, could I?

The Proper Head.

Husband (studying his wife's accounts)—There are several items you haven't entered here. Doing up the furniture, your hairdresser, dentist, trip to the sea, for instance.

Wife—Oh, those all come under "repairs."

As to Baseball.

"Look at the team New York has. New York is no yap town."

"Do not sneer at smaller towns, my friend. The New York team is composed of young men from Terre Haute, Warren, Syracuse, Toledo, Little Rock, Kankakee, Ypsilanti, South Bend and Waco."

College Yell by Mail.

A group of noisy youths on their way to New York from a football game the other day cut loose with something new in a college yell. It went like this:

"Down with Harvard, down with Yale!
We get our education through the mail—
I. C. S.!"

A Grievance.

"How many magazines does Biffurs take?"

"One."

"Which one?"

"Mine!"

Not His Diet.

"Please, mum, I'm starving, an'——"

"You clear out, or I'll call the dog."

"Dog, mum? Lor, bless yer, I don't eat dog!"

Even Worse.

"What's worse than finding a worm in your apple?"

"Finding half a worm."

Incredible.

An old colored lady in the South had occasion to visit the doctor to inform him that her husband was ill.

The doctor hastened home with her, and upon making a diagnosis pronounced it a hopeless case of gastritis.

"Gastritis," ejaculated the old woman. "De Lawd only knows how he eber got gastritis, 'cause I don't burn a ting but coal fie in dis house, an' powerful little ob dat."

Preoccupation.

"Do you think the automobile has a demoralizing influence?"

"I'm afraid it has," replied Mr. Chuggins. "When a man has to remember how fast he can go in different parts of town, and the rules about displaying numbers and sounding the horn at crossings and letting smoke escape from the exhaust, and keeping his lamps in order, and cutting out the muffler, and various other things, he's liable to be so preoccupied that the Ten Commandments don't get their reasonable share of attention."

A Safe Position.

The Italians bound for Tripoli were boarding a transport.

The colonel was at his post watching the men. As one of them stepped on the gangway his mother clutched him and pulled him to her bosom.

With intense emotion she cried and crooned over him, and then she saw the colonel.

"My boy," she exclaimed, "stick close to the colonel and you'll never get hurt!"

Equal to Emergencies.

Little Hazel—We've invited too many children to our tea party. There isn't enough for them to get more than a bite each.

Little Dot—That's too bad! I dess we'll have to call it a reception.

Nothing to Worry About.

"You will be the victim of a fatal accident."

"Good gracious!"

"Calm yourself. It won't happen until the end of your life."

Taking the Time.

Redd—Did you ever time yourself in your automobile?

Greene—Oh, yes; it took me an even hour to start it yesterday.

City Kidlet—Why don't you pull out the corks and let the milk run out?

Poor Father.

"Yes, we are going to the seaside again. All but father. Father says he must have a rest."

"Going a-dshing, eh?"

"No. He's going to stay at home."

She Was Right.

Bloobs—My wife thinks it's wicked for me to play poker.

Slobbs—It is, the way you play it.

He Was It.

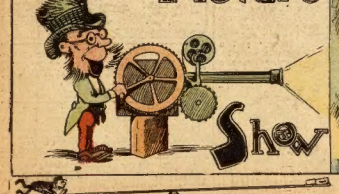
Bacon—Your wife told my wife that new silk dress of hers came from a worm.

Egbert—That's right. I'm the worm.

Self-Evident.

He who finds he has something to sell,
And goes and whispers it down a well,
Is not so apt to collar the dollars,
As he who climbs a tree and hollers.

THE PROFESSOR'S DILEMMA.



The Professor—Well, there being no bridge I'll throw my specimen case across.

And jump over after it, thus accomplishing my purpose—

As well as if I had—

Great guns! There my specimen case is on the other side again!

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Comes in handy metal box—a convenient cake that lasts for months. 25 cents at all druggists—or sent direct.

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Bayles Co., 1824 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, Mo.

THINK IT OVER.

A belle of Maine was Herminia,
Who formerly banged her hair;
Augusta wind came whizzing by
And blew her cranium bare!

Of papers novels she had a gross,
For them she had a mania;
Likewise she spent considerable time
In Reading Pennsylvania!

Her brothers numbered seventeen,
All worked for their Herminia;
While some were wheeling cabbages
Some were Wheeling West Virginia!

One poor brother was in hard luck!
To Sing Sing he did go;
He was caught at making dollar bills—
Also caught at Macon Geo!

The hairless girl fell into a dream,
And then fell out of bed;
She dreamed of her love for Attle,
But Attle would not wed.

Then she cried "I must Seattle,"
As she rose Tacoma pleat
Of flowing, auburn false hair
That she picked up at her feet.

But her tears and vows were wasted,
And her heart was full of pain;
Arizona held dear Attle
'Neath her Tombstone on the plain.

Then she piped "Oh, Walla Walla!
Della's going to the fair—
But I wear my New Jersey,
Whatinell will Delaware?"

NOT AS USUAL.

"You never can tell," said the old lady who was visiting from the small town. "About a girl, that is. Take Rosina Murr, for example. For one thing, she was prettier than that Miss McElroy you were all raving about last night so madly."

"Impossible," said the chorus. "There couldn't be any one prettier than Kate McElroy! Why, she's a perfect, natural blonde!"

"Well, Rosina was ten times more natural!" declared the old lady firmly. "She was the kind that looks as though she had been made out of roses and cream and peaches. And she had heaps of hair that was so canary yellow that all her life her little brother had to lick all the boys in town who said that their sisters said she touched it up and blondined it. It really was unfortunate hair, because it looked so gloriously impossible. She had the figure of an advertisement lady and a cheerful disposition and a father with money. In short, Rosina was calculated to drive every other woman to hopeless, voiceless rage because it just wasn't possible to equal her at all.

"It seemed that she had everything—every advantage as to material things as well as to looks. No other girl had a bit of a chance when Rosina Murr was around—but as she was a generous, good natured girl, she worked hard trying to distribute her adorers among the wallflowers. The catty ones said that she did it only because she didn't want them herself, but I think Rosina ought to have the credit for going to all the trouble, anyhow. There wasn't a man in town she couldn't have married if she had wanted to, so naturally she stayed single.

"Nearly all the other girls of her age got married eventually to the men who tired of waiting for Rosina to change her mind. She outgrew the fluffy stage, where all a girl demands of a man is that he be good looking and happen along at the time. She was witty, too, and it took a smart man to keep up with her. We decided it would not be any ordinary man that Rosina Murr would make up her mind to marry.

"The summer that Judge Wagner's brother came to recover from typhoid we thought she had met her fate. Mr. Wagner was tall and distinguished looking and a lawyer and had traveled abroad and just to look at him you knew he would be perfectly at home if the toastmaster called on him unexpectedly for a speech.

"Judge Wagner's brother took to Rosina immediately and seemed to think that she was the right medicine for a typhoid patient. Anyway, you rarely saw her when he wasn't along. And she seemed to enjoy it, too. I never saw her look prettier or laugh more or put herself out more to be charming.

"We had the wedding all planned and the girls who knew they'd surely be asked to act as bridesmaids had decided on the color of their gowns—and then Mr. Wagner went away rather abruptly and Rosina smiled on. One of the girls asked her if she didn't like him and Rosina said he was perfectly fine and she had so enjoyed her summer. She didn't seem to realize how mad and disappointed we all were with her.

"It was just the same when James Miller came to visit his sister for a week and stayed a month. He was something in stocks in Chicago and one of those dark, clever men who scare you, but he didn't scare Rosina. She sparkled at him and he became instantly a groveling worm. He was her slave and not only did he not care who knew it, but he wanted to shake in the public's face the chains that bound him.

"He had heaps of money and we thought how fine it would be for Rosina to be able to go in the best city society and have a limousine. She always did have beautiful clothes, but now no doubt she'd have whole ermine wraps and never wear the same dress twice. But Mr. Miller also departed abruptly—and Rosina smiled on.

"People scolded awfully about it. She was getting older each year and even her beauty would not last forever—and what on earth did the girl want? She had had chances that most girls never come within reaching distance of and each one she tossed overboard. We said she would end by picking out some one who was no account and that it would serve her right. There's the old proverb about going through the woods and picking up a crooked stick at last, and we harped on it strong. No doubt she would end her days over the washtub supporting a worthless husband and regretting that she hadn't acted sensibly when she had the chance. It always turns out that way."

"Well, what did she do finally?" asked one of the girls. "Marry the town drunkard or elope with a carpet beater agent who deserted her at the next town?"

The old lady smiled. "No," she said. "When she was 29 years old Rosina went away on a visit and met the man she married the next summer. He was just as good looking in his way as she was in hers, had a fortune of several millions and I forget which foreign country he is minister to now. So you see, as I said, you never can tell. The general rule fails sometimes!"

"Well, we are perfectly disappointed!" chorused her listeners. "She didn't deserve it!"

The Little Princess.

The Queen of Holland lives the greater part of the year at her country seat of the Loo, near Apeldoorn, in Gelderland. There Princess Juliana spends the whole day in the royal park, where she has her little baby house, her poultry yard with the fowls she feeds with her own hands, her dog, two ponies, and a deer.

Every day at the Loo as well as at The Hague some children are invited to play with her in order to mitigate as much as possible the double loneliness of her position as a future queen and as an only child.

The Queen likes to invite various children by turns, so that the Princess may learn at an early age to be friendly to all sorts of people and not show too great a preference for a chosen few. These little three-year-olds are quite free in their games, and often treat their royal mistress with scant respect.

One of them, proud of her dainty patent leather shoes, said to the Princess: "I think my shoes much prettier than yours." Whereupon little Juliana looked beautifully at her strong laced-up boots, saying: "And yet these are my very best."

A few days before the court left The Hague the Princess was taken for a walk in the Scheveningen Woods. It had rained during the night, and for the first time it dawned upon her young mind how delightful it is to walk in the puddles, and especially to stamp one's foot in them till the drops fly about.

This performance was witnessed by some admiring juvenile subjects, whose parents will no longer be able to admonish them with the saying so common in Dutch nurseries: "Juliana never does this," or "Juliana never does that." Their paragon has proved to be only human after all.

During an audience which the Prime Minister, Mr. Heeniskerk, had with the Queen, the Princess was sent for. When the nurse came to take her out for a drive, the Queen said: "Now say 'Good-by, your Excellency.'"

She could not be made to repeat those words, but as soon as the footman had opened the door so that her retreat was safe, she cried: "Good-by, curly head," which allusion to Mr. Heeniskerk's flowing mane was much appreciated by those present.

Just Punishment.

A farmer driving along a country road was thus rudely accosted by a young man whom he met:

"Hello, Reuben! Give me a lift to Hightstown, will you? I might as well ride with you as walk."

So the young man climed up, and beguiled the way with lively chatter. After a few miles had been traveled, he said:

"It's quite a distance to Hightstown, isn't it? It's a good thing for me that I met you."

"It is quite a distance," answered the farmer.

After a few more miles, the young man asked: "Say, farmer, how far it is to Hightstown, anyway?"

"Well," replied the farmer, "keepin' right on the way we're going now, I sh'd say 'twould be about twenty-four thousand miles or so; but if you wanted to git out and walk back, it wouldn't be very much more than ten miles."

Handicapped.

Miss Cute (an amateur palmist)—This line in your hand, Mr. Dubb, indicates that you have a brilliant future before you.

Dubb—Is that so?

Miss Cute—Yes, but this other line indicates that you are too slow ever to overtake it.

Money! Money! Money!

Lots of it—quick, sure, easy. Show our immense line of Supreme made-to-measure clothes to your friends and strangers. Make more in a day or spare time than in a week at anything else. These snappy up-to-the-minute styles—the big line of all-wool fabrics—and our thorough exquisite tailoring make an instantaneous hit. We are one of the oldest firms in business. Supreme Styles, Supreme Fabrics and Worksmanship, are known all over the United States and have been for years. Our reputation will land many an order for you. Show others what you have—and build up a big, steady profitable business of your own. No experience necessary, we'll teach you.

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PATENT your invention. Free preliminary Work. Inventor's Primer free. Established 1864. Milo B. Stevens & Co., 637 F St., Washington; 357 Monadnock Blk., Chicago

At Dead of Night.

(Continued from page seven.)

might not have found it so easy to jump at conclusions; though sooner or later, knowing with whom he was dealing, he would have turned toward Hotchkiss when seeking an explanation.

"Remember, Hotchkiss, you are expected to make a bee line for the Compton, and square up things there with the superintendent."

"Oh! I hope it may not be too late. I'd hate to find the police in charge, and asking ugly questions."

"That's where you're luck holds good again. I asked Tarbox to keep mum about the robbery as well as what took place upstairs, until I had made my investigation."

"Then no one knows about poor Paternoster?"

"Outside of Tarbox, the niece of the dead man, the gentleman whom she is about to marry, and the dead man's valet Arundel, who was home with his family all last night, with a doctor in attendance the entire time, nobody has as yet been told. So see to it that you keep your lips sealed on the subject. It might get you into new complications if you breathed a word of it."

"Wild horses couldn't drag it out of me. I've got my hands full as it is, without any more trouble."

"All right, then Hotchkiss. I think I'll leave you now. Guessing what your dodge was, I expected I'd find you in your old hiding place."

"Perhaps I ought to thank you, Mr. Blair, for letting me down so easy."

"Don't do it," said the other, sternly; "I want no thanks from you. I despise you too thoroughly to accept anything like that. And for the last time I warn you Hotchkiss, that unless you mend your ways I shall make it my business to land you."

Leaving the man almost in a state of collapse the detective quitted the room. He saw the white-haired old lady looking after him, and again cursed the wretch under his breath, because he was a wicked son, and brought sorrow down on the head of the mother who bore him.

When Gideon Blair strode away from that brick house with the white shutters and the snowy door, nestled down in one of the crooked streets in old Greenwich Village, he seemed to square his shoulders, and draw in a long breath. Perhaps it was because he felt as though he had been breathing poison while in the company of such a despicable scoundrel as Hotchkiss. Then, again, it might be that, having thrown aside all these minor clews, after investigation that had revealed their lack of value, he was now ready to make a real start upon the one particular trail, which, in his mind had promised great things from the beginning.

Carmen! Ah! that very name seemed to promise success; for is was imbued with the very atmosphere of mystery and intrigue!

Carmen, who had once been a bold bareback rider in the tanbark arena of the circus, her name applauded nightly by admiring audiences! Carmen, the original of the photograph which Blair carried in his inside pocket, and which he had found hidden in the rooms of the dead man! Carmen, the hot-blooded Mexican, whom possibly the gay Paternoster may have pretended to love for a season, until he tired of her and cast her aside!

In his mind the sleuth ran over the facts. He marshaled them before him just as an officer might his company, before sending it to engagement.

The presence of the photograph proved that Paternoster must have known Carmen at some time in the past. Then there was the strange man who had asked to see Toplady, presumably knowing that the gentleman was out.

Tarbox had been puzzled to know where he had met him before, since his voice and features seemed dimly to recall some one; but upon being shown the photograph of Carmen, with whom he had often taken part in acts in the arena, he had instantly declared it to be the face of the mysterious caller. Toplady had denied ever knowing any one by the name given by the one who asked. And last but not least, the caller had vanished, when Tarbox returned after using the house telephone, and finding that Toplady must be out.

No one had apparently seen the caller depart, since the door boy was dozing at his post; and hence it appeared that, taking advantage of the absence of the superintendent, this person might have slipped up the stairs!

Only one object could have caused such a move on the part of the unknown. Was that object revenge? Had Carmen in disguise come to the Compton, bent on wiping out her wrongs after the furious methods of her hot-blooded race?

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Habit Too Strong.

Two nice ladies, out for early bargains, met in front of a store on the avenue.

"I saw you in church yesterday, dear," gurgled one.

"Oh! were you in church?" burbled the other.

"Yes, love. And I noticed that you had at last made your husband accompany you to divine worship."

"Of course he went with me. He'd rather go to the theater, but the theaters aren't showing anything on Sundays now. But he disgraced me."

"In church? How?"

"The rector read four chapters from 'The Acts of the Apostles.' And my husband insisted on getting up and going out after every act."

* * *

Every woman would study geography if the boundary lines were hemstitched.

A WOMAN'S APPEAL

To all knowing sufferers of rheumatism, whether muscular, or of the joints, sciatica, lumbago, backache, pains in the kidneys or neuralgia pains, to write to her for a home treatment which has repeatedly cured all of these tortures. She feels it her duty to send it to all sufferers FREE. You cure yourself at home as thousands will testify—no change of climate being necessary. This simple discovery banishes uric acid from the blood, loosens the stiffened joints, purifies the blood, and brightens the eyes, giving elasticity and tone to the whole system. If the above interests you, for proof address Mrs. M. Summers, Box 457, South Bend, Ind.

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It will look well on your mantel-piece or on your table among your best things. Hour after hour, year after year it faithfully performs its duty of telling you the correct time.

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This is, indeed the most beautiful and valuable premium we have offered, and this offer will appeal to thousands of our readers, for this clock is absolutely free.

Read Below How to Get the Clock Free, and get it at once, for we are able to make this big offer only through a lucky purchase and the supply is limited.

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There are four ways to get this clock FREE. The first way is to send us $2.00 for a year's subscription to The Saturday Blade and Chicago Ledger together, and on receipt of your subscription, we will send you this handsome brass clock free, all charges prepaid.

The second way is: If you prefer either one of these great papers for yourself get some friend to send their subscription to either one of the papers along with yours and send us the $2.00, and we will send you the clock absolutely free, all charges prepaid. Of course, your friend would not be entitled to the clock, but the good value of the Blade and Ledger should appeal enough to induce your friend to give you the subscription.

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Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

500 Dearborn Avenue.

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GENTLE JABS.

It's easier to get left than to be either right or President.

It doesn't take much red hair to tint up several generations.

The woman who fails to say "because" must have another excuse.

Good resolutions are the only buried treasures most people have.

A man has reached the turning point after a pretty girl passes by.

The man who gets gay with a busy bee is apt to get a stinging rebuke.

The man who borrows trouble usually gets more than he bargained for.

If a man means well that may be the only creditable thing about him.

Love is apt to be blind until a third party enters—then it can see a mile.

Political strife isn't very far from what a famous general once said war was.

The man who makes good doesn't sit down and wait for his ship to come in.

Probably there is nothing more expensive than the things we get for nothing.

A man may not know who his friends are, but he usually has his enemies spotted.

When it comes to the truth, even a druggist is unable to supply anything "just as good."

Every time a man stands up for his rights he is apt to tread on some other fellow's toes.

The only way a man can convince his wife that her opinion is wrong is to agree with her.

A girl may never trouble herself about a man's future if he comes her way with a present or two.

If it wasn't for his wife a man would never know anything worth knowing about his neighbors.

Give a woman a hairpin and she is prepared to open almost anything from a conversation to a department store.

A woman always wants to dictate the way her husband shall part his hair, even when he has to do it with a towel.

The only time a henpecked man is allowed to head the procession is when his wife thinks she hears burglars downstairs.

It sometimes happens that a man performs his duty with fairly good grace—if he is unable to find some kind of an excuse for not doing it.

A Sweetheart's Secret

(Continued from page five.)

land he could, he's turned poor people out of doors, and the only friend he seemed to have was your Uncle Trajan. They used to take long walks together, and now and then they came this way. I could see that he had your uncle under his thumb, for the old man failed fast during the last three years of his life. One night—I shall never forget it—I went over to the village and took the near cut home, which was through the estate of Marshedge. But perhaps I shouldn't go on."

"Go on," I cried, eagerly. "You came through Marshedge?"

"Yes. I saw a light in the library window and my curiosity got the better of me. You know women are curious, Mr. Roland? Well, as I looked through the window, I saw that your uncle and Jason Sellers were alone in the room. They must have been having a dispute about something, for all at once Jason Sellers seized a pen and thrust it into your uncle's hand. At the same time he pointed to a paper which lay on the table. Trajan Marshall was forced to sign something, I know not what, and Jason Sellers placed the document in his pocket. The next week we heard that Sellers owned the east section which runs down to the big woods."

"The scoundrel!" I cried.

"I have never told any one till now what I saw that night in the library. We all fear Jason Sellers. After he came home from abroad he hasn't been the man he was before. He's got an iron hand. I'm desperate glad, Mr. Roland, that he didn't get Claudia."

I had listened to the woman's story with clinched hands. I saw that I owed much of my trouble to Jason Sellers. I resolved to have it out with him some day, and I said to myself that it would be in no gentle manner.

I walked back to Marshedge in no pleasant humor. The face of nature seemed to have changed. The sea was still now, and from the marsh came the songs of strange birds. Why not go down to the village at the edge of which Jason Sellers had erected the most princely establishment in the whole country, and beard the lion in his den? It was not late and I would surely find him at home.

The resolution grew upon me as I advanced. My blood seemed to surge through my veins like a lava stream. I would not sleep until I had confronted this man whom I believed had poisoned my uncle's mind against me. As I opened the front door I heard voices in the library. They were subdued and ceased as I clanked the portal.

Out of the semi-darkness at the end of the hallway suddenly loomed the form of Jenkins, the maid. Her face went quite white as she caught sight of me.

"I think you are wanted in there, Mr. Roland," she said, pointing toward the library.

"Thank you, Jenkins."

I turned halfway round and opened the door. The following moment I stood stock still and looked. In my uncle's chair sat Brutus Bobbs, the constable, and near him was a man whom I did not know.

"Good evening, Mr. Marshall," said the fat little functionary, rising. "I have an unpleasant duty to perform. You are under arrest, charged with the murder of your uncle, Trajan Marshall!"

This dramatic story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. Read it. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It only costs $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Saving of Mark Twain.

It is not generally known, thinks "Jim" Gillis, who is quoted in an article by Mr. A. B. Paine, how near American literature came to missing the contributions of Mark Twain. One pail of water was all that saved him to the world as a story-teller and humorist.

Gillis, who was a pocket miner in California in the '50s, was always glad to have his lonely life in the mountains cheered by visits from his friend, Sam Clemens. On these occasions Gillis would give the young newspaper man lessons in the laborious but fascinating business of prospecting. One afternoon, when they were following certain tiny sprayed specks of gold that they hoped were leading them to a pocket somewhere up the long slope, a chill rain set in. As usual, Gillis was washing and Clemens carrying water. The "color" was getting better with every pan, and Jim Gillis believed that at last their weary labor was to be rewarded. He would have gone on washing and climbing toward the precious pocket, regardless of everything, but Clemens, shivering and disgusted, declared with each pail of water that he would bring no more. He was wet through and his teeth chattered. Finally his tone changed from protest to decision.

"Jim," he said, in his deliberate way, "I'm through. This work is too disagreeable."

Gillis had just taken out a panful of dirt.

"Bring one more pail, Sam," he pleaded.

"I won't do it! I'm freezing!"

"Just one more pail, Sam!" he begged.

"No, sir, not a drop, not if I knew there was a million dollars in that pan."

Tearing a page out of his notebook, Gillis hastily posted a thirty-day claim-notice by the pan of dirt and then the two set out for Angels' Camp. It kept on raining and storming and they did not go back. A few days later Clemens received a letter that made him decide to return to San Francisco.

Meanwhile, the rain, washing away the top of the pan of earth left standing on the hillside had exposed a handful of nuggets—pure gold. Two strangers—Austrians—had come along and observing it had sat down to wait until the thirty-day claim of Jim Gillis should expire. They did not mind the rain—not with all that gold in sight—and the minute the thirty days were up they followed the lead a few pans farther up and took out—some say $10,000, some say $20,000. In either case it was a good pocket. Mark Twain missed it by just one pail of water.

Still, it is just as well, for Jim Gillis always declared, "If Sam had got that pocket he would have remained a pocket miner to the end of his days, like me."

* * *

His Alma Mater.

The four young men were sitting around a table in a Broadway cafe one night. The topic of conversation drifted to colleges.

"Yale is my alma mater," said one.

"I went to Columbia," said another.

"Harvard was mine," said the third.

The fourth didn't have anything to say. Finally one of the others asked him if he had ever attended college.

"Sure!" he replied.

"What's your alma mater?" another asked.

"The Missouri State Reformatory," said the fourth young man.

The subject was dropped.

* * *

Going Far Away.

When a group of visitors was going through the county jail recently a burly negro trusty was called to open doors and perform other similar duties for the visitors

"How do you like it in here?" one of them asked.

"Like it? Lawd, if evah Ah gets out o' heah, I'll go so fer frum town it'll take $9 to sen' me a postal card."

* * *

Free Asthma and Hay Fever Cure.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for asthma and hay fever in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to any one who will write him for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

* * *

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, bringing the pink blush of youth to the face and roundness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS—Great harvest now, write. E. J. Worst, Ashland, Ohio.

AGENTS—Men and Women; sell guaranteed Hosiery. Credit plan helps you. The line that repeats. Exclusive agency to hustlers. Dept. B1., Lehr Mfg. Co., Denver, Colo.

STARK BRO'S, Louisiana, Mo., Big Idea in tree selling. Best terms known to nursery world. Box 80.

$2.50 per day paid man or woman. In each town to distribute free circulars and take orders for concentrated flavoring in tubes. J. S. Ziegler Co., 448 South Dearborn street, Chicago.

PORTRAITS—Photo pillow tops, photo china plates, frames, sheet pictures, etc., at prices below the lowest and guaranteed. Rejects credited. Prompt shipments; 30 days' credit, catalogue and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey Co., Desk L 1, Chicago.

AGENTS—Make $2.00 each selling our wonderful Luminous Crucifixes; nothing to sell six a day; absolutely new; shine all night in darkness. Pioneer Portrait Co., 1758 West 63rd street, Chicago.

AGENTS—New Fiber Home Broom; Costs same as good broom; outlasts four; sold only by agents. Guaranteed. Hilker Mop Co., 1205 Grand ave., Chicago.

HELP WANTED.

AUTHORS—Clever, But Undiscovered, Story and Poem Writers send us your manuscript. Porter Publishing Co., Valparaiso, Ind.

WANTED—Men and Women—For Government positions, $80.00 month. Annual vacations. Short hours. No "layoffs." Common education sufficient. Over 13,000 appointments coming. Influence unnecessary. Farmers eligible. Franklin Institute, Dep't 31, Rochester, N. Y.

LEARN the Barber Trade. Few weeks completes. We control many excellent positions. Tools given. Branches in all leading cities. For information regarding any one, write Dept. 10, Moler College, 738 South Wabash ave., Chicago, Ill.

GOVERNMENT Post Office Examinations everywhere soon. Get prepared by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Write for Booklet B. Patterson Civil Service School. Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—Active man in each locality. To join this Society. Add introduce our Memberships. Sick, accident, death benefits. All or spare time. Make $50 to $500 a month. Write, Box CK-283, Covington, Ky.

LEARN to write advertisements—Earn $25 to $100 weekly. We can positively show you by mail how to increase your salary. Prospectus free. Page-Davis Co., Dept 77, Page Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

BE EXPERT Detective and Investigator. Many waiting positions at big pay. Stamp for particulars. National Detective Agency, Dep't 406 A, Chicago.

SIMPLIS Shorthand—New invention. Shortest and easiest learned mail course. Send 20c for first lesson. Churchill Business Institute, Dep't L, Grand Rapids, Mich.

I WANT a County Manager willing to learn business; will pay $6 to $10 a day right from start; $8 to $15 a day when going. Life job. It's house-to-house selling, but it pays, commission, but it pays. Are you willing to learn what you don't know? Write Sales Manager, 108 Sycamore st., Milwaukee, Wis.

RAILWAY Mail Clerks, Carriers, Wanted. Good Pay. Fine Positions. Pay for Instruction after you receive position. Liberty Institute, Dep't 101, Rochester, N. Y.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

MAKE a comfortable living at home sewing plain seams. Any ordinary sewing machine. All home work. No canvassing. Steady. Sewers wanted in each town. No triflers reply. State how much time can sew. Send ten cents for postage, samples, etc. Returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewing Company, New York Jobbers Sewing, "BL" Dept., Rehoboth, Delaware.

LADIES can make shields at home; $10 per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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FRUIT LANDS—Beautiful Kootenay Valley, B. C., 88 acres, sub-divided into 2 4-acre tracts, 11 of 5-acres and one of 25 acres. The 25-acre tract is improved, has dwelling, stable, ice-house, etc. All for a limited time at the low price of $6,000. Adjoining land held at $200 per acre. Will cost you nothing to write and investigate. Owner forced to realize thereon. ¼ cash, balance easy terms. Only six hours from Spokane, Wash. Pure water, ideal climate and very low taxes. Address D. B. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Illinois.

FOR WOMEN

IMPORTED Cotton Goods. Write for our special prices. J. Irving Prier, Richmond, N. Y.

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BOYS! GIRLS! Free! Air Rifles, Roller Skates, Big Dolls, Cameras, Watches; Sell 20 Scarfpins 10c Each. Return $2.00. Hahn, Ossining, New York.

PATENTS

INVENTIONS Patented Free—marketed on Commission. Address, Inventors' Agency, Chicago. Also valuable inventions constantly for sale. Promoters wanted.

TYPEWRITERS

TYPEWRITERS—All makes $10 up. Free trial. Guaranteed two years. Express prepaid. Francke Payne Company, Rosedale Station, Kansas City, Kansas.

MISCELLANEOUS

PICTURES, Drugs, Books, etc., Gentlemen like. 30 samples 10c postage. List 2c. Ord., Long Beach, Calif.

RUBBER GOODS, Drugs. These are O. K. Particulars 2c. A. Pine, Long Beach, Calif.

BARGAIN—Three fine neckties $1. Gold-plated Pin free. Ties alone retail at $2.50. This offer is for short time only. Send $1 at once. Money refunded by return mail if not satisfied. Name colors desired. W. C. Watkins, Parnassus, Pa.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

DRINK HABIT—Guaranteed home treatment three days—lifelong result. The only reliable. Book mailed free. Edw. J. Woods, 534 Sixth avenue, M 356, New York, N. Y.

PERSONAL

FREE Reading by trance medium. Send date of birth—dime. Dr. Eagle, Saginaw, Michigan.

MARRY: Catalogue with photos and descriptions Free. Pay if suited. Select Club, Dept. 674, Tecumseh, Mich.

I TELL your future by handwriting. Send birthdate and dime. Madame Walker, 506 W. 146 st., New York City.

MARRY—Many rich, congenial and anxious for companions. Interesting particulars and photo Free. The Messenger, Sta. D, Grand Rapids, Mich.

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MARRIAGE Paper Free; best published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRY—Photos, descriptions and P. O. addresses of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

MARRY Rich—Matrimonial paper of highest character, containing hundreds of photos and descriptions of marriageable people with means; mailed free, sealed; either sex. Write. One may be your ideal. Standard Cor. Club, Box 607, Grays Lake, Illinois.

MARRIAGE Paper; Highest Character; Incorporated; 16th year; 8,000 members; paper sealed; send 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1600, Denver, Colo.

MARRY, thousands wealthy, anxious for early marriage, descriptions free. Confidential, 268 Market st., San Francisco, Calif.

ANYONE desiring marriage is invited to write, Mrs. Hyde, 2676 Mission st., San Francisco, Calif.

FREE Life Reading—Trance Medium. Send birthdate and dime. Dr. Smith, Dep't 36, Marion, Mich.

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Puncher Pete—What's your uncle doin' these days, sonny?

Sonny—He's lyin' 'round when he ain't tradin' hosses and when he's tradin' hosses he's lyin' just the same.

A Colored Man's Problem.

"A man," said Rev. Plato Johnson, in the course of a very eloquent sermon, "is a very curus animule. He is the only animule dat don't have a good time when he is a baby. Did dat idee ever 'cur to your mind before? After he is dead he may go to hebben, but after he's born, an' till he gits able to take care of hisself, he has no comfort, an' he don't let nobody else hab any. Look at de dogs, w'at a time dey has togedder. Dey is born free or four at a time, so dey needn't be lonely, an' de minute dey gets dere eyes open dey begins to play an' fool wid each other an' to 'joy dem-selves. Look at de lamb. Well, dat lamb of Mary's had a great deal better time dan Mary had herself before she was big enough to go to school. Whoever heard of a lamb's havin' de toofache or de measles or colic? W'en night comes de calf lies down quiet by de side of its mudder, an' dat's de last you hear of it till sunrise nex' mornin'. Did you ever hear of a calf havin' de chickenpox or de mumps? Echo answers: 'None of dose things 'curs in de lower animule world.'

"Now how is it wid de human baby? He ain't gen'rally in de world mor'n half an hour before he begins to let de whole neighborhood know dat he's come at last, an' intends to stay. He's got a immortal soul, which Mary's lamb had to go widout; but it does seem to me, brethren, dat he pays for dat privilége wid a lot of things dat de lamb and de dog wouldn't have on no consid'ration. He no sooner gits well started before he has to bite a rubber ring all day to get his teeth through, an' w'en dey's comin' through de fader has to tote de baby all nite, an' de baby yellin' all de time loud 'nuff for a town crier. No, de fac' is dat de human animule done have no happiness till he grows big 'nuff to have a home of his own, an' even den his misery has just begun. Brethren, dis complex problem has sp'iled my sleep a great many times."

A Strange Habit.

William Lyon Phelps, professor at Yale, told the following story at a recent New Haven banquet:

"A hard drinker was informed by his doctor that he could be cured if every time he felt that he must have a drink he would immediately eat something instead.

"The man followed the advice and was cured, but the habit of asking for food had become so fixed with him that he was once nearly locked up as a lunatic. He was stopping at a hotel, and, hearing a great commotion in the room next to his, he peered over the transom to see what the matter was. He saw, and rushed madly down to the office and shouted to the clerk: "The man in 153 has shot himself! Ham and egg sandwich, please!"

Arthur—How did he make his money? Oh, inventions!

Ethel—Indeed?

Arthur—Yes; invented a long line of royal ancestors and married an heiress.

Nothing but Talk.

The following is told of a Federal official, formerly a Senator of the United States from Kentucky:

In the days of his youth the Kentuckian was asked by a friend to second him in a duel. He consented, and at sunrise the parties met at the appointed place.

Now it was this Kentuckian's duty to say the last words touching the terms of the duel. But, although he faithfully performed this duty, the duel never took place.

A murmur of "Why not?" invariably goes around whenever this story is told, whereupon the answer is as follows:

"For a very simple reason. When Joe finished speaking it was too dark for a duel."

That Glorious Climate.

Eastern Man—Is that climate of yours all that it is claimed to be?

California Man—Healthiest climate in the world.

"Well, I've heard of a good many people who went there and came back worse than before."

"The climate is all right; but you see, as quick as their health returns, they get interested in the land boom and buy."

"Yes"

"Well, after that they worry themselves sick trying to sell it."

The Deacon's Decoy.

A colored preacher of Richmond recently "exchanged" with a brother divine in an Alabama town. Shortly after the assumption of his new charge the Richmond minister was much scandalized by the action of one Deacon Smith, who, in the vestry after service, was observed deliberately to withdraw a fifty-cent piece from the contribution box and to substitute therefor a dime.

"Deacon Smith!" exclaimed the newcomer. "This is down-right dishonesty!"

Deacon Smith was in no wise perturbed. "It ain't nothin' of de kind, pastor," said he, quite conscious of his own rectitude. "De fact is I's led off with dat half-dollar for de last six years. It ain't no contribution; it's a temporary loan as a noble example!"

No Charge.

The man with the old clock under his arm laid it on the jeweler's showcase. "I wish you'd see what is the matter with this," he said.

The jeweler removed the dial, screwed his eyeglass into place and inspected the works of the ancient timepiece.

"Nothing is the matter with it—now; its sufferings are over."

"Well, how much do I owe you?" asked the man.

"Nothing," answered the jeweler. "This isn't a professional treatment. This is a coroner's inquest."

The Dentist—Let me see. I'll have to treat four teeth—eight teeth—eighteen teeth——

Mr. Pildo—Hold on! Four teeth, eight teeth, eighteen teeth! What do you think I am—a comb?

HOW TO AVOID AND RELIEVE

Summer Complaints

SUCH AS

CRAMPS, DYSENTERY, DIARRHOEA, CHOLERA, MALARIA, SUNSTROKE and STOMACH TROUBLES

Drink plenty of cool water—not ice water—eat sparingly of well cooked food, including vegetables, and before each meal and on retiring take a tablespoonful of

Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey

in a little water. Then summer complaints will have no terrors for you—your stomach and bowels will be in fine condition to do all the work called upon.

If, through neglect, any of these complaints have taken hold on you, Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey is again "the friend in need." It is a sure remedy and will bring quick relief.

It is unequalled in cases of emergency, prostration, chill, at any time, but particularly so in the summer, for owing to its extreme purity and the absence of fusil oil and tannin from its makeup it does not overheat the blood. It is the best, and should always be kept near at hand.

BE SURE YOU GET DUFFY'S

Sold in SEALED BOTTLES ONLY by druggists, grocers and dealers or direct. $1.00 a large bottle. Write our doctors for advice—absolutely free—with valuable illustrated medical booklet.

MEDICINE SPOON FREE

We want every reader of this advertisement to have one of our graduated sanitary glass medicine spoons. Send your name, plainly written, with 2c stamp, for postage, to

The Duffy Malt Whiskey Company,
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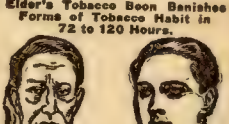
(The days of big profits are past)

Our big new modern factory is turning out the Best Engine money can buy, guaranteed 5 years, with every advantage at big reduction in prices, no risk, guarantee fulfilled or money refunded. Use distillate, gasoline and many other fuels. All sizes. 1 1-2 to 50 H. P., any style. Write quick for free catalog and new special prices, stating size wanted.



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Instead of spending thousands of dollars in expensive magazine advertising and paying big profits to dealers, I prefer to send this Beautiful Sugar Shell absolutely free, believing that when you see it you will become one of my regular customers by mail and buy all your silver and silver-plated ware from me at less than wholesale prices.

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LEARN TO HYPNOTIZE! Influence and control others. Make fun by the hour. Treat diseases and bad habits. New and instructive method. Great money-maker. YOU may learn it! Very small cost. Success sure. Wonderful illustrated TREATISE and full particulars FREE. Send address.
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Habits Easily CURED by Hill's Chloride of Gold Tablets will cure any case in from ten to thirty days. Perfectly harmless, cause no sickness, can be given secretly in tea or coffee. Testimonials sent sealed FREE.
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GUARANTEED CAMERA Takes pictures 2½ x 2½, completes an outfit in 10 minutes. Never fails. A child can operate it. Sample Camera and everything needed for taking pictures, sent prepaid for 25 Cents. Order Now. Film Camera Co. Dept B South Norwalk, Conn.

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PATENTS Watson E. Coleman, Washington, D. C. Books free. Highest references. Best results.

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Dr. Elder's Tobacco Boon Banishes All Forms of Tobacco Habit in 72 to 120 Hours.

"What Tobacco Boon Will Do."

A positive and quick relief. A Home Treatment easy to take. S. E. Addington, of Bethel, Okla., writes: "Your Tobacco Boon has cured me after using tobacco 24 years." H. S. Evans, of Meridian, Miss., writes: "I had been a heavy chewer for 64 years. After taking your treatment 5 days I was completely cured." Adolph Erigen, of Pigeon Falls, Wis., writes: "I would not take $1,000 for what good your Tobacco Boon did me." Hundreds of similar letters from satisfied patients.
REMEMBER—We give a legal Binding Guarantee of results in every case or money refunded.

FREE BOOK on the Tobacco Habit also full information about my Home Treatment will be mailed free in plain package to any one. Do not wait—send name and address TODAY.
DR. ELDER'S SANITARIUM, Dept. 383 St. Joseph, Mo.

DON'T CUT OUT VARICOSE VEINS

But reduce them, stop pain and inflammation with

ABSORBINE JR.

A mild, safe, antiseptic, discutient, resolvent liniment, and a proven remedy for this and similar troubles. Mr. H. C. Kellogg, Booket, Mass., before using this remedy, suffered intensely with painful and inflamed veins, they were swollen, knoted and hard. He writes: "After using one and one-half bottles of ABSORBINE, JR., the veins were reduced, inflammation and pain gone, and I have had no recurrence of the trouble during the past six years. Also removes Goitre, Painful Swellings, Hydrocele, Varicocele, Bruises, "Black and Blue" discolorations, etc., in a pleasant manner. Book 7 F free. Price $1.00 4-oz., $2.00 12-oz. bottle at druggists or delivered.
W. F. YOUNG, P. D. F., 337 Temple St., Springfield, Mass.

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At Your Home. Write today for our booklet. It tells how to learn to play Piano, Organ, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Banjo, etc. Beginners or advanced pupils.
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Write—right now—for our wonderful offer. It has startled the world! Get a nobby suit and a pocketful of money free! Taking orders from our grand tailoring from your friends is as easy as rolling off a log. You can make $10 a day—many make more

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Don't sweat and grind your life away for a bare living—get this free suit and easy money. Our suits sell like hot cakes for $3 to $10 less than other houses. Better tailoring, better proposition, better guarantee. A letter or postal brings everything—samples, fashion plates, tape measure, instructions, etc. This is a gold mine for you. And, remember, it's all free.

Dress Like a Prince for Nothing!

One of our swell suits on your back will sell scores of others. Backed by our experience and money, you are bound to succeed. Our made-to-order suits and pants sell like wildfire. You don't have to be a salesman. You don't need to be a judge of clothing. No experience necessary—we teach you.

ACT NOW! If you want to succeed, wear fine clothes and bear the jingle of the coin in your pocket—write for our big free offer. Your ONE big chance! Start your letter off NOW—this very minute. We Prepay Express Charges. Every garment a union-made garment and bears the union label.

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$68.75 PROFIT IN ONE DAY

That is what Lieon, of N. Dakota writes. Bryant, of Colorado made $16 in 5 hours. Russell, of Utah, writes: "I made $1200 in 4 months." Hundreds of similar letters.

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New business. Unsettled field. With small capital and A-O-LUTELY NO EXPERIENCE you can own a business that will earn $2000 to $5000 a year profit. New discovery.

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"Mandle" Machine takes, finishes and delivers 3 original photo post cards a minute. Finished RIGHT ON THE SPOT. Makes two 4-inch postcards—also photo buttons. You can own a business that will earn $2000 to $5000 a year profit. New discovery.

This is not a Tin-Type Machine 500 per cent Profit. In the country, on the streets, at picnics, carnivals, fairs, the one minute post card man makes big money. Small outlay of money invested. Simple instructions enable you to go to work immediately. Write today for BOOKLET FREE. Learn more about this wonderful little 6 lb. portable post card gallery.

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THIS THIN MODEL 20 YEAR WATCH $3.75

Biggest hunting case beautifully engraved, gold finished throughout 4-ten wind and stem set. Sized with 7 jeweled American made lever movement, guaranteed 20 years, with long gold finished chain for ladies, vest chain or fob for gents.

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DO NOT BUY UNTIL YOU SEE IT. Let us send it C. O. D. for examination as your nearest express office, and if you think a bargain and equal in appearance to any $10.00 gold finished watch pay the express agent our special sales price $3.75. Mention if for man or lady. State size wanted.

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These 4 RINGS FREE

Send your name and address and we will send you 12 Beautiful Oriental Rings to sell at 10 cents each. All the rage in New York. When sold return us $1.20 and get these four Solid Gold Lead Rings Free, also our 20-page premium catalog listing 100 premiums and how to get them. SCHUR CO., 784 Grieshi., Palmyra, Pa.

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WE PAY 50 per cent. Hundreds of dollars have been made in successful songs. Send us your work, with or without music. Acceptance guaranteed if available. Washington only place to secure copyright. Valuable booklet and examination FREE. **H. Kirkus Dugdale Co., Desk 220, Washington, D.C.**

STEM SET WATCH AND COWBOY FOR FREE made, stem wind & stem set watch with beautiful engraved case, guaranteed five years, and the new Cowboy Watch Fob, given free for disposing of only 8 of our fine Art Pictures at 10c each, or chain instead of fob, if you prefer. Send name and will send pictures at once. Remit $2 collected and Fob or chain. A great offer. Don't miss it. **M. O. SEITZ, 4A51 CHICAGO**

BIG VALUE COMBINATION for 10c

50 popular songs, words, music. 50 adventure stories. 50 pretty girl pictures. 50 new games. 20 pictures of presidents. 50 ways to make money. 1 great joke book. 1 love and courtship book. 1 book on magic. 1 book on letter-writing. 1 dream book and fortune teller. 1 rook book. 1 base-ball book with all rules. 100 conundrums. 60 secrets for boys and girls. Send us 10c and we will send all the above and big novelty and jewelry catalog at once.

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RIEGER'S Monogram WHISKEY

Express Prepaid

8 Full Quarts Rieger's Monogram **$5** Private Stock

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FREE two sample bottles, gold tipped glass and cork-screw with every order. Over 165,000 customers have proven that our whiskey is by far the best ever distilled. For smoothness and mellowness of flavor it cannot be equalled. Send remittance with order. Money refunded if whiskey is not perfectly satisfactory. Order today.

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Our Boys' Corner

The Stolen Million

Or, JED BRONSON'S LEGACY

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 32, August 10. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

CULLY.

IN ONE of the narrow streets of New York stood a building which for years had not borne the best of reputations. It was well known to the police as the abode of a gang of men who were the sleekest crooks that ever plied their calling in the great metropolis.

On the third day after the mysterious loss of Jed Bronson's million a man entered one of the upper rooms of this place and dropped into a chair near a table. He was tall, slim and had sandy hair. There was a sinister look in his deep brown eyes and when they fell upon a youth who was lying on a cot in one corner they seemed to change color.

"Get up," he said harshly, and the boy rose and stared at the man.

"What do you want?" the slim man went on.

"Nothing," answered the boy, who seemed to fear the crook, for crook he was.

"You've got to clear out," resumed the person in the chair. "You've got to slope."

"But I don't want to go," protested the youth.

"You've got no voice in this matter. I can't afford to keep you here."

"But you said you would stand by me."

"Shut up!" commanded the crook. "I'm master of the situation. I say you've got to go. You will cross the river into Jersey and vanish."

The boy, who was good looking, turned his face away and a tear ran down his cheek.

"Come here, Cully." The boy turned reluctantly and faced the crook. "I'm not going to send you off empty-handed," pursued the other. "You won't want for anything. All you have to do is to remain in hiding till the hunt's over."

There was no reply.

"Here!" The man rose and went over to a little cupboard set in the wall and unlocked a door. He took out a large black pocketbook and began to count out a lot of bills. The boy eyed the proceedings doggedly.

"Here's two hundred," and that amount in clean, crisp bills was pushed toward the youth. "That will keep you till all's well again."

"Look here, Mr. Jim," said the boy, refusing to take the money. "I don't like what I've done."

"You don't eh?" snarled the man.

"No, I didn't do right. The money the lawyers paid me never belonged to me."

"What if it didn't?"

"You made me do it. You said there was nothing wrong in it, and I obeyed you. I am not Jed Bronson, of Rosedale, wherever that is. I was scared all the time I was in the lawyer's office, and was glad to get out when I got the swag."

"Mebbe you'd have played chicken if you had stayed longer," growled the merciless crook. "You're going over into Jersey this very night, or you'll never leave this city alive."

The boy bit his lip and inwardly groaned.

"I don't want any more whimperings," the man went on. "You've got nothing to pack. You don't need any baggage. When you're across the river you will be met by a man who will take you to a certain place. Don't forget this."

"What man?"

"Never mind," was the reply. "You are Cully from now on, for we've dropped the Jed Bronson title."

As he finished, the smooth-faced crook rose and went to the one window in the room. The boy watched him furtively. All at once his courage seemed to increase. He looked around the room and spied a heavy cane which stood in one corner. He sprang forward and snatched it from its place.

"I don't want your money, for I'm not going away!" he exclaimed determinedly. "There it is!" He threw the bills back upon the table. "You've got no right to make me a thief."

Astonishment seemed to dart from the crook's eyes.

"I've got a right to make you what I please," he thundered, halting before the boy, who did not yield an inch. "Throw down that stick!"

Cully only tightened his grip on the blackthorn and straightened with defiance in his eyes. The crook for a moment did not know what to do. The unexpected defiance startled, positively shocked him.

"I'll break every bone in your little body!" he roared. "I'll wipe you off the face of the earth. There's your share of the spoil, and across the river is Jersey."

"But I don't want to go."

"You want to remain here and betray us."

"I—I won't betray any one," protested Cully.

"You lie!" Take hold of him, Major."

The boy turned to see the person whom the crook seemed to have addressed, and the next instant found himself in the strong arms of his persecutor.

"That's an old trick and it always works," chuckled the man, as he shook the heavy cane from the youth's grasp. "It's a cold day when they git ahead of Oyster Jim."

Cully was dragged to the chair and thrown upon it. His face was white and his eyes seemed to scintillate with indignation. What the crook would do next he did not know.

"Now," suddenly resumed the brute, "it's Jersey or death."

Cully eyed his master, but did not reply.

"Which do you choose?" snapped Jim. "I can't wait all day for your decision."

"Tell me one thing," began Cully.

"Well?"

"What was in that big package which the lawyers gave me when I handed then the two letters and told them I was Jed Bronson."

The crook broke into a loud laugh.

"You don't think they were almanacs, do you?" he guffawed. "Let me tell you a secret. It was the greatest pull of our lives. Them there papers are worth almost a million dollars on the markets."

"And you're going to keep them from their rightful owner?"

"All's fish that comes to Oyster Jim's net."

"They'll get you for that trick some day," shot the boy.

"I'm dead," again laughed Jim. "Oyster Jim is dead in the eyes of the hounds. He's dead in law, was killed in a raid over in Jersey. They don't look for dead men, ha ha." His thin sides fairly shook with merriment.

"It's needless for me to tell you how Oyster Jim came to life," he suddenly pursued. "It was one o' the neatest tricks ever played on the police. Now, what's your decision?"

Cully, fairly in the rascal's power, seemed to have been thinking deeply.

"I'll go," said he, sententiously.

"That's sense," cried Jim. "But before you go you will have to take an oath to keep a still tongue in your head."

The boy appeared to resist this demand, but a hand fell heavily upon his shoulder.

"It's the oath or death!" exclaimed the crook. "Don't think that because you're in Jersey we've lost sight of you. Not for a minute, my boy."

"If you by spoken word inform any living person that you went to the office of Judd & Jerrold, and by declaring that you were Jed Bronson secured anything, you shall die."

"I understand."

"Hold up your right hand."

Grating his teeth, Cully did so and repeated the oath which the crook administered.

"That's good judgment," said Jim, when the oath had been taken. "Now, get ready to cross the river."

"I'm ready now."

An hour later Cully, watched by a slim man who sauntered behind him, boarded a ferry boat and was whisked across the river. When the boat drew up to the wharf on the Jersey side he stepped ashore and was touched by a short man who laid his hand on his shoulder.

"This way. Glad to see you," said this individual, and the boy trotted alongside the strange man until they reached a certain part of Jersey City, where a halt was made.

A small frame house rose before the boy, and he was soon ushered inside where he was confronted by an Amazonlike creature who eyed him like a wolf.

"This is the boy," said the little man. "You will take care o' him, Meg."

"That I will," replied the woman, whose wolfish eyes fairly glittered. "Looks like a nice kid, eh?"

"Oh, he's a peach," answered the man with a light chuckle. "If he gets ob-

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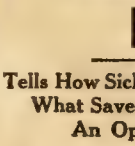

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streperous, you know what to do, Meg, but I guess he's got his orders."

Cully cast an upward glance at his conductor and then looked at the giantess. In another moment he was alone with his jailoress.

"What did they send for your keep?" she demanded.

The boy drew the roll of bills from his pocket and threw it at the woman's feet.

"You can take all of it!" he exclaimed. "I don't want a dollar. It's worse than blood money."

The woman snatched the bills from the floor and looked at the boy.

"Of course I'll take it," she laughed. "You're not to go out of the house without orders. I've got my orders, and if you disobey—well, if you do, you'll regret it the rest o' your days!"

CHAPTER V.

A CLEVER HOODWINK.

Several days passed, and Boston Kyle had made no report concerning his search for Jed Bronson's million. The two boys quartered at the Hotel Charlotte wondered why he had not shown up since his inspection of their room, and were fast coming to the conclusion that, finding the mystery too baffling, he had abandoned the chase.

"We may as well pack up and go home," Jed said one day. "Our bush bird isn't going to light in our hand."

"It begins to look that way," responded Ned. "Besides, my funds are getting short, and we must keep enough to get home on."

The evening mail brought a letter addressed to Jed which he opened with manifest eagerness.

"What's this?" he exclaimed, as several crisp bills fell upon the table. "Somebody is sending us some money, a part of the million perhaps," and the youth laughed.

"What does the writer say, Jed?"

"The letter is as mysterious as the theft of the million," was the response. "Listen to this," and Jed read as follows:

"Mr. Jed Bronson: Enclosed find twenty dollars, which I trust will not come amiss. I hope the million will turn up before long.

"A SYMPATHIZING FRIEND."

"It won't come amiss, that's a fact," observed the heir. "Some day, perchance, I'll have the satisfaction of returning this friendly loan with compound interest. We've got one friend, at least, in this city," and he transferred the money to his pocket, not without looking at it carefully to make sure it was genuine.

"I guess we'll take the train for Rosedale tomorrow," he continued. "If Mr. Kyle hits the trail he can report to us by mail. Now, let us take a parting stroll through the Battery."

They left the hotel and made their way to the great breathing spot at the termination of the city, and after a walk there repaired to a bench to watch the throngs of people who had sought to get rid of the oppressiveness of the crowded streets.

"Jed," suddenly exclaimed Ned, "have you noticed that man on the bench under the tree to your right? I've been noticing him for some time, and he has been watching us with more than common curiosity."

The young heir to old Dannemar's wealth turned his head and looked at the person designated by his companion.

"He's been there ever since we came here," Ned whispered.

The man on the bench was not out of the ordinary in looks or dress. He was well clad and his face was covered with an auburn beard. He carried a small rattan cane with which he seemed to be scratching the grass at his feet.

"I don't see why he should notice us," observed Jed, after a minute's inspection. "We're nothing to him."

Presently the man lit a cigar and, rising, came toward the two boys. Without so much as an invitation he took one end of their bench and spoke in pleasant tones.

"You don't seem to be city boys?" said he. "I take it that you are from Jersey."

The chums exchanged hasty glances.

"We are from Pennsylvania," said Jed.

"In the city long?"

"We've been here but a few days and are going home tomorrow."

"You surely haven't seen all the sights."

"Oh, I think we've seen enough to last us the balance of our lives," Jed smiled.

The man crossed his slender legs and flicked the soil with his cane.

"I've a lot of relatives in Pennsylvania," said he, looking up. "I think I shall go see them before long."

"In what part of the State are your relatives?" Jed ventured.

"They live in Bucks County. My uncle is postmaster of Rosedale."

The boys started in spite of themselves.

"You might know my uncle," the man went on. "I haven't seen him in years, but I guess he's the same old Amos Grubss he's always been."

"We know him!" Ned exclaimed before Jed's look could check him. "We are from Rosedale."

"You don't say!" cried the man with the cane. "Now, that's nice. Is he still postmaster?"

"Yes."

"And a more honest man than Amos Grubbs, I venture, never lived. I'm sorry you're going away so soon. I would like to show you the city. My name is Noah Harkaway. I hope you've enjoyed yourselves since you've been here."

"I can't say that we have," Jed answered with promptness. "We've been unfortunate, but I guess it all goes in a lifetime."

It is not surprising that a strange man should ingratiate himself in the good graces of two country boys who knew but little of city life. His manners were suave and pleasing, and, then, the mention of Amos Grubbs' name was calculated to disarm any suspicion that might arise in their minds.

"If we were going to remain longer," said Jed, "we should be happy to have you show us the city."

"Why not remain?" exclaimed Harkaway. "I am so glad to see boys who know my uncle that I am willing to do anything in my power to entertain you. I hope the misfortune you speak of wasn't much. You haven't been robbed, have you?"

The man seemed to break down the last barrier of distrust.

"We were robbed a few nights ago at the Hotel Charlotte of two letters of the greatest importance to one of us."

"Indeed? There are a thousand-and-one crooks in this city, men who prey on their fellow men. I am sorry to say this, being a New Yorker myself, but it's true, nevertheless. May I ask you to tell me your story?"

Without much hesitancy Jed proceeded to relate the story of the theft of his legacy, and Noah Harkaway seemed to listen with breathless interest.

"It's too bad," he said, at the close of the narrative. "It's downright villainy, and I trust Mr. Boston Kyle, of whom I have heard, will run the rascals down."

"Do you think more than one man is connected with the burglary?"

"Pardon me, I did not intend to convey such impression," was the quick response. "But it is not unusual for city sneak thieves to work in pairs. I could tell you many stories of strange robberies, and if you haven't anything particular on your minds, I would like to show you where I live."

"You are very kind."

"Besides, I would like to send a letter to my uncle at Rosedale by you."

"We'll be glad to take it, sir."

A moment later all three were walking from the park, and not long thereafter the boys were seated in a neatly furnished room which Noah Harkaway said was his lodgings.

"I'll write the letter when I've told you some wonderful stories of burglaries that have come under my observation whilst serving on the police force."

For several hours he kept the two chums interested in the startling stories he spun with a glibness that was remarkable. He had a wonderful gift of narration and the time flew swiftly by.

"On second thought," said he, when he had spun his last yarn, "I won't write to that Rosedale uncle of mine. You may tell him that you've seen his nephew and will give him my best respects. I'm glad to have met you. The man who robbed you may do you further injury if you remain in the city. These fellows are revengeful, and if your burglar fears that you are helping Boston Kyle, he may turn and rend you like a lion. I don't like to see you go back moneyless, so I trust you will accept a little sum from Noah Harkaway, because you know his uncle in Rosedale."

With this the man drew a well-filled pocketbook and began to count out some bills. The boys looked on amazed.

"Now, don't remain in this wicked town," he said, as he looked up. "I advise that you get away as early tomorrow as possible. Please accept this little offering," and he laid one hundred dollars on the table and pushed it toward Jed.

"I can't take that money," the boy exclaimed. "I haven't earned a penny of it and——"

"But you must take it!" was the interruption. "It's given as freely as the air you breathe," and almost before Jed knew it the banknotes had been crammed into his pocket.

The boys were half-dazed by their strange adventure when they found themselves on the street. As they entered their hotel they saw a man advancing toward them, and he asked to be taken to their room.

"I've been waiting for you," said he, as he revealed himself as Boston Kyle. "You remember that I cautioned you to keep near the hotel?"

"Yes, but as we are going home tomorrow, we took a stroll down to the Battery, where we met a benefactor who took us to his rooms and added to our funds."

"What's that?" cried the detective. "You struck a philanthropist, did you?"

"A man who called himself Noah Harkaway, the nephew of Amos Grubbs, the Rosedale postmaster."

"What did this open-hearted man look like?"

Jed described Mr. Harkaway whilst Boston listened with a smile.

"You've missed the crooked finger, Jed," put in Ned.

At this the sleuth leaned back in the chair and laughed till his sides shook.

"I see, I see!" he cried. "Oyster Jim isn't dead, after all!"

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CHAPTER VI.

AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

The Rosedale boys looked from Boston to each other and waited for the detective to become calm.

"Oyster Jim?" echoed Jed. "The name is new to me."

"But not to me," was the reply. "That crooked finger reveals the deception. Do you know where he led you?"

"I did not take much notice of our route from the Battery, but we did not go far. It was in a narrow street that we stopped and before a two-story house with a greenish door."

The detective seemed to make a mental note of the slight description.

"See here," he said, leaning forward. "You're not going home tomorrow, no matter if Mr. Noah Harkaway did finance you for the trip. But I prefer that you change your quarters. I know a quiet place better than the Hotel Charlotte, and if you'll go with me——"

"We'll gladly do that," interrupted Jed. "When shall we give up our room?"

"As soon as I'm out of sight. I'll meet you at the first corner down street."

An hour later the boys were installed in a well-furnished room in a modest hotel some squares from the Charlotte and were still wondering at what Boston Kyle had said about Oyster Jim.

Meantime in another part of the city, Miss Ivy Orton, late stenographer for Judd & Jerrold, was having a little adventure of her own. She had sallied from her lodgings for the purpose of making a few needful purchases, and had just emerged from a store when she was tapped on the arm. Turning quickly she looked into the face of Samson Jerrold, the senior member of the law firm.

"Pardon me, Miss Orton," he said, in his kindly tones, "but I happened to spy you on the street, and have waited at the door for your exit."

Ivy's look was an interrogation.

"I trust you don't blame me for the severance of our business relations?" he continued.

"Not at all, Mr. Jerrold. I could not get over Mr. Judd's insinuations, and I left your employ with no hard feelings toward yourself."

"I'm glad to hear that," was the reply. "You have taken a load from my mind. Are you going home?"

"Not directly——"

"Then let me speak to you in private somewhere. I think I can tell you something about the mysterious robbery of the Bronson boy's million."

"I shall be delighted to learn all I can about that affair," said the girl, as they walked away from the store. "I do not want to suspect Mr. Judd in connection with it, but——"

"I think there is no occasion for you to do that, as I will stand sponsor for Phin's honesty. He's been drinking some of late, and, though I have remonstrated with him, I fear my appeals have had no effect! He's a good fellow when not in his cups, and he thinks a great deal of you, Miss Ivy."

Samson Jerrold conducted the girl to a quiet place where he sat down and nervously crossed his legs.

"Of course you are sorry that the boy lost his legacy?" he began, closely regarding Ivy, who was wondering what was coming.

"It has troubled me not a little. I have tried to be of some assistance to Jed Bronson."

"You have? Now that's just like you, Ivy. What have you done?"

"I have sent him a little money to help him defray his expenses in the city."

"Out of your slender resources?" exclaimed Jerrold.

"I have saved some money, Mr. Jerrold," replied Ivy, with a little flush. "I have no large bank account——"

"Of course you haven't," was the interjection, as Jerrold proceeded to produce a well-filled pocketbook. "How much did you send the Bronson boy?"

"Never mind that," protested Ivy. "I did not beggar myself."

"But you must not lose that money," cried Samson. "I have an abundance."

He counted out five tens which he laid upon the table.

"I cannot accept your generosity," Ivy exclaimed. "Besides, I didn't send him the half of that sum."

"Take all of it, anyhow," and Jerrold put up his pocketbook. "Now to the other matter." He leaned back in his chair, and his gaze dropped to the floor for a moment.

"You know I'm a bachelor, Miss Ivy," he resumed. "For some time I have been thinking that it was time for me to seek a wife, and I have resolved to do so."

"There's nothing wrong in that," naively answered the girl. "I don't think you will have any trouble finding a suitable wife."

"I've found one already."

"Then let me congratulate you."

"Thanks. The truth is, I am now looking into the bright eyes of the person whom I've selected to become Mrs. Samson Jerrold."

A deep flush which Ivy could not suppress overspread her face.

"I have long thought kindly of you,"

"Look, Mr. Jerrold! That is the man!"

Jerrold went on. "Fact is, I could see no one but yourself."

"You must pardon me, Mr. Jerrold. I haven't even thought of marriage."

"But you can think of it now," persisted the lawyer. "I'm not a bad fellow."

"I know that," and the girl smiled. "You have been very kind to me, and I am under many obligations to you for many little helps that have brightened my life."

"It is settled then," and Jerrold rose to his feet with happiness beaming on his countenance.

"If you mean marriage, Mr. Jerrold, it is not settled," answered the girl. "I cannot become your wife."

"Not when I can make you a happy woman and give you everything a woman's heart can desire?"

"Not even then," was the reply.

"Then I've lost the prize!" and Jerrold's face lost color. "You've got a lover?"

"Not to my knowledge."

The lawyer rubbed his hands hopefully.

"Just now I am interested in another matter besides marriage," Ivy continued.

"And what is that, pray?"

"The recovery of Jed Bronson's legacy."

"Still sticking to that subject," lightly exclaimed Jerrold. "If I should help in the recovery you will listen to my proposition?"

"I can make no promises for the future."

"That's not exactly a final rejection," was the reply. "The mysterious theft has puzzled me. I think it also puzzles Boston Kyle. If we could only find the boy who impersonated Jed Bronson we wouldn't be long getting at the bottom of the matter. That boy is in the hands of

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the man or men who robbed Jed Bronson."

"I believe that."

"It will be like looking for a needle in a haystack to find him in New York. Maybe he has been put out of the way by his employers to keep him forever silent."

Ivy did not know. She had read of such things.

"We are trying to keep the mystery from the newspapers," continued Jerrold. "To have it get out would impair our legal business. We can't afford to have it get abroad."

"That is true, Mr. Jerrold."

"I'm willing to give half my fortune to find that stolen legacy. I am going to do all I can in that direction. And when we've found the missing million I'm going to talk to you again, Miss Ivy."

"You are always welcome with me," replied the girl, flushing again, for Samson Jerrold was the soul of honor.

When the beautiful stenographer found herself once more on the street, after bidding the lawyer good-by, she hurried away.

"I don't believe Phineas Judd is mixed up in this affair," she said to herself. "I believe the man who called when he was out that day saw the letter which the firm sent to Jed Bronson informing him of his good luck. Whether that man saw the boy reach the city or not I cannot say, but the million was stolen just the same. I remember that Boston Kyle started when I told that the visitor had a crooked finger, but, after all, that may mean nothing."

A moment later, when the girl happened to look over her shoulder, she saw Samson Jerrold discreetly following her. At first she flushed indignantly at the discovery, but knowing that he was honorable, she walked on.

As she turned a corner she almost collided with a man who was walking rapidly. The fellow begged her pardon, and in doing so she caught sight of his face. A thrill seemed to tingle every nerve. Turning on her heel she darted after the stranger who was approaching Jerrold. She could not be mistaken. It was the same face and the identical form.

"Look, Mr. Jerrold!" she cried passionately, as she seized the lawyer's arm. "That is the man!"

"What man, Miss Ivy?"

"The man who came to the office and saw the letter to Jed Bronson. Don't lose sight of him. He has a crooked finger and——"

Samson Jerrold waited to hear no more, but was off like a shot.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

Ella—I was in a head-on collision the other evening.

Stella—You are old enough to give up these kissing games.

Juvenile Logic.

"Why," asked William Faversham, "does the infantile gift of logic vanish in later years? A grown-up will have brain fever arguing from effect to cause, while a youngster gives the reason offhand. Take my small friend Dorothy, for instance. There's a logical mind for you! A lady who lived across the street from her was so ill that for a time it was feared she could not recover. The husband had a thick carpet of straw spread over the whole block in which he lives to deaden the noise of traffic.

"This straw engaged the attention of Dorothy. For several days she regarded it with curiosity, and finally, when the danger had passed and men were removing the straw, she went to her mother and asked:

"'Mother, what was the matter over at Mrs. Smith's?'

"'God sent Mrs. Smith a new baby,' answered her mother.

"The child went to the window and stood watching again. Finally she turned and said:

"'They pack babies awfully careful, don't they?'"

Mr. Burnett's Vote.

"Arthur," said Mrs. Burnett, the wife of the rising young Congressman, "I want you to make me a promise."

"All right," he replied, "you know I'm always ready to promise you anything."

"Thank you, dear. I know you are. That is why I want you to make me this one. But first I want you to tell me about Mr. Wangley. The papers have been saying a lot about him, but I haven't quite found out why. They want to expel him, don't they?"

"Yes, Wangley seems to have secured his seat by unfair means. It looks as if he will have to go."

"Are the other members going to vote on his case?"

"Unless he resigns before the matter comes to a vote."

"And if they vote against him will he be expelled."

"If a majority of them do so he'll have to go."

"Arthur, I want you to vote for him."

"But, my dear, I've lined up with those who are in favor of expelling him."

"I don't care. Promise me that you will vote for him."

"I can't promise you that. He bought his seat. The case against him is absolutely clear."

"But he is always so nice to his wife."

"That has nothing to do with this matter. He paid money for votes. The law doesn't allow that."

"I am sure that he is perfectly true to his wife."

"Nobody has raised any question concerning his domestic affairs."

"You must promise me that you will vote for him."

"It would be political suicide for me to vote for him. He's crooked. There's not the slightest doubt of it."

"But he is perfectly lovely to his wife."

"Why do you keep bringing his wife into it? She doesn't cut any figure in this case."

"She doesn't? I'd like to know why. I want you to vote for him."

"Don't be absurd, my dear. In a matter of this kind one must put aside all personal considerations and look at it from the broad standpoint of the public welfare."

"I don't care. He always treats his wife as if he were absolutely devoted to her. So I want you to promise me that you will vote for him."

"See here. If you had the right to sit in Congress and to vote there and some other woman had secured her election by crooked work, would you vote in her favor if the question of her expulsion came up merely because she was kind to her husband?"

"I don't know. It doesn't make any difference. I want you to promise me that you will vote for Mr. Wangley."

"But the man is a briber—an enemy to society; he has used his office for the purpose of making himself rich; he has no political conscience; on election days he hires thugs to intimidate and slug the voters who are against him; he deserves to be driven from public life."

"He is lovely to his wife. So let's not talk about it any more. But remember, if you break your promise I shall know about it."

Stepdaughter's Revenge.

A charming story of the arrival of "the new mother" in the home of the Beecher family is told, in Mrs. Stowe's own words. Lovely as the newcomer proved to be, the "stepmother-idea" had yet got some hold on the childish mind of the small daughter, Harriet, with the result that she formed a bold scheme of retaliation.

"I was about six years old, and slept in the nursery with my two younger brothers. We knew father was gone away somewhere on a journey, and was expected home, and thus the sound of a bustle or disturbance in the house more easily awoke us.

"We heard father's voice in the entry, and started up, crying out as he entered our room:

"'Why, here's pa!'

"'And here's ma!' called out a cheerful voice from behind him.

"A beautiful lady, very fair, with bright blue eyes, and soft auburn hair bound about with a black velvet bandeau, came into the room, smiling, eager, and happy-looking, and coming up to our beds, kissed us and told us that she loved little children and would be our mother.

"We wanted forthwith to get up and be dressed, but she pacified us with the promise that we would find her in the morning.

"Never did stepmother make prettier or sweeter impression. The next morning I remember we looked at her with awe. She seemed to us so fair, so elegant, so delicate that we were afraid to go near her. We felt a little afraid of her, as if she were a strange princess rather than our own mamma; but her voice was very sweet, her ways of moving and speaking very graceful and she took us up in her lap and let us play with her beautiful hands, which seemed like wonderful things made of pearl and ornamented with rings."

Nevertheless, in a fit of exceptional boldness Harriet marched up to her, and putting her little hands behind her back, and thrusting her head forward, said defiantly:

"You have come and married my pa, and when I grow up I will go and marry your pa!"

Mike's Excuse.

Mike and Pat by trade were hard-working brickmasons, but good attendants at church. The clergyman's Sunday sermon topic at which both attended happened to be temperance.

The next day, while out visiting other members of his parish, the clergyman spied Mike coming out of a saloon with a pail of beer. The clergyman, in surprise, asked him if he had forgotten his Sunday sermon appeal on temperance. Mike said he remembered, but it was customary to get a pail of beer at lunch time. The clergyman talked to him awhile, and soon had the best of his good nature. He then said:

"Mike, if you are a man, you will empty the contents of that pail in the gutter."

He was just about ready to comply with the good man's wishes, when it struck him that half of the beer belonged to Pat. Turning to the minister, he said:

"Pat is waiting for me, and paid for half of this beer, and my half is at the bottom."

All Ready for the Blessing.

A United States Senator tells this about his little girl: He says that when his family had gathered for dinner, little Elsie was too busy with her playthings to suspend, and her mother called to her to come.

"Yes, in a minute," was the response.

"But we are all waiting," said my wife, "and your papa is waiting to ask the blessing."

She came in, climbed into her chair, folded her little hands demurely, bowed her head, and said, in a low voice:

"Let her go, Gallagher!"

"I am afraid," said the Senator, laughing, "that the blessing invoked at my table that day was slightly incoherent."

You can always tell a belle by her rings.

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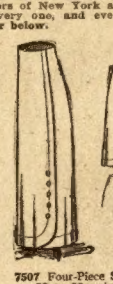

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